



Chroniding the culture of currency

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Destinations divided by Date Line

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Bringing bahok to Beijing

Bahok, a Bengali word for "carrier," is what they call their multi-arts dicipline – an answer to the meaning of "home" in the context of globalization.

Three dancers from the National Ballet of China will perform with five dancers from the British Akram Khan Company in the form's world premiere January 25 at the Tianqiao Theatre.

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好运北京
GOOD LUCK BEIJING

**Pre-Games
sports special**
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Back from UK, but still wanted in US

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Courses in a hutong, at The Hutong

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Agricultural products for Olympics guaranteed safe

By Huang Daoheng

The government will pay special attention to food safety during the upcoming Olympic Games this August and will ensure food is of the highest quality, a senior official said Tuesday.

Speaking at a press conference organized by the State Council Information Office, Gao Hongbin, the agriculture vice minister, said the ministry has worked with Olympic organizers to ensure food safety during the Games.

"During the Olympics, there will be a special crew in charge of

food supply," Cao said.

"[The crew] will ensure that products in food markets are sufficient in quantity, high in quality, rich in variety and safe to eat," he said.

A special monitoring center for food safety will also be set up in Beijing. The center, according to the ministry's earlier press release, will be in a centralized command of food safety work during the Games, issuing warnings for food risks and dealing with food-related emergencies.

Cao said the food will come

from China, though he did not rule out the possibility of importing some products.

The minister said the food safety drive will target ordinary Chinese citizens rather than athletes. "The Olympics will be a way to highlight the need to ensure the sustained improvement of the quality and safety of agricultural products in the whole nation," he said.

Serious gaps in standards remain between food in China and in developed countries, and it will take three to five years to

establish a quality system for agricultural produce to meet international standards.

Responding to a recent *New York Times* article on China's fish farming industry entitled "Fishing in toxic waters," Cao declared the report sensational and misleading.

"It is a question of common sense. Do you believe fish can live in toxic water?" Gao asked.

There are many safeguards in place for aquatic products, and at least 98 percent of China's aquatic exports meet standards, he said.

Artists invited to paint the Olympics

By He Jianwei

Artists from Olympic host cities and 80 countries and regions may create artistic pieces to submit to the Olympic Fine Arts (OFA) 2008 exhibition, which began accepting pieces Thursday morning in the Supreme Ancestral Temple of the Forbidden City.

Works may be submitted before May 31 in one of five categories: traditional Chinese paintings, oil paintings, prints, sculptures and digital art. Submissions opened after the ceremony, and all pieces will be judged by teams formed by domestic and international authorities and experts.

From June 23 to September 17, a visual landscape project called "Urban Art Corridor" will exhibit the artistic works within the urban traffic network including the advertising boxes at bus stops and on walls in hutongs.

"I hope this event can be more innovated, more featured to promote the participation of domestic and international artists in the Olympic movement but also promote the mutual progress of Chinese modern sport and culture undertaking," He Zhenliang, chairman of International Olympic Committee Commission for Culture and Olympic Education, said.

During the Beijing Olympic Games, large-scale art exhibitions, art and Olympics forums will be organized and a series of activities, both home and abroad will be held after the Games conclude.

To motivate domestic and international college students' participation in the OFA, the Organizing Committee of OFA 2008 set up five awards for new young artists.

The International Olympic Committee held the first Olympic sports and art contest in Sydney in 2000 to promote the development of sports culture. During the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, 56 countries and regions submitted 100 pieces.

Medal bearer selection almost complete



Photo by James Wei

By Li Fenghua

The selection of 380 women from more than 10 universities to present the Olympic medals is almost complete, a spokesman for the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (BOCOG) said.

The women will present

medals and flowers to winning athletes during the award ceremony of the Olympic Games, the spokesman said. Their training classes will begin between March and April.

According to BOCOG, the standard of the medal awarding girls has been worked out, and the stan-

dard list which includes the body, which will provide the basics.

The selection is now underway for the volunteers in 10 more universities. 380 girls will be selected from them. The girls will carry medals and flowers to the winning athletes in the medal awarding ceremony.

Raunchy film gets the ban hammer

By Han Manman

The government has stepped up its efforts to combat online "pornographic" productions with a new series of regulations for online audio and video content which take effect at the end of the month.

The move comes shortly after its banning of *Lost in Beijing* for sexual content and unapproved participation in an international film festival.

Banning the film

A spokesman for the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) said Thursday that *Lost in Beijing* broke regulations by using "unhealthy and inappropriate promotional materials" in its marketing.

SARFT suspended the film's screening license and is set to punish its producers. The producers were accused by SARFT of distributing deleted scenes on the Internet, entering an unapproved version of the film in the

Berlin Festival, and engaging in "improper promotion."

The film company will be barred from producing new movies for the next two years, and the producer Fang Li will be banned from any involvement in film for the same time.

What is 'pornographic'?

Huang Weiqun from the SARFT supervision center told CCTV that the government does not subjectively determine if a work is "pornographic." It uses a clear definition in determining which videos are "obscene" and must be banned from the domestic Internet.

Huang said his job is to supervise and monitor online audio and video production, and when pornographic and violent material is found, he reports it to a higher authority.

He said sexual scenes or scenes with exposed genitalia cannot be broadcast. He said some productions walk a fine line when "the lead-

ing actor and actress's flirting could evoke unhealthy sexual images in the minds of viewers."

He said the students are one-third of China's netizens. Youth are not qualified to independently judge if content is pornographic, unhealthy or may otherwise influence them negatively, he said.

New regulations

SARFT and the Ministry of Information Industry (MII) have published "Regulations for Online Audio and Video Services," the terms of which will take effect starting January 31.

Under new regulations, all online audio and video service providers will be required to apply for an "Online Audio-Visual Broadcasting License."

Unlicensed companies are not allowed to provide audio and video upload services for individuals, and licensed companies may not allow individuals to upload news content.

Mice found on US flight tested negative

By Han Manman

The eight mice found on a United Airlines (UA) flight from Washington to Beijing Monday were not carriers of dangerous infections, a spokesman for the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ) announced yesterday.

AQSIQ said the eight were common house mice, and the group included four males and four females. The mice tested negative for parasites, chlamydia, plague and typhus.

The UA reported to the quarantine department of Beijing Capital International Airport (BCIA) on Sunday afternoon after landing that they found live mice on the flight UA897.

Che Zhijun, vice director general of BCIA's inspection and quarantine department, said an emergency team was immediately dispatched to the aircraft. All entry to the plane was shut down pending further examination. The team placed rat poison and mouse traps at every corner of the craft, including in the cockpit.

Che said that eight mice were found and some hidden in pillows. The mice were sent to the lab for tests. The team also investigated where the mice came from.

Experts said mice can spread as many as 35 fatal viruses, and there is a risk of fatal accidents if they chew through the plane's wiring and circuits. They also said it is rare to find so many mice on an aircraft.

Brief news

Confiscated

The government confiscated about 149 million pornographic, pirated and unauthorized publications in 2007.

These included 3.72 million pornographic publications, 3.2 million unlicensed newspapers and magazines, 3.36 million smuggled discs and 136 million pirated publications, a spokesman for the National Office for Cleaning Up Pornography and Fighting Illegal Publications said.

80,000 win Olympic coveted roles

Organizers have chosen 80 percent of the 100,000 volunteers needed for this year's Olympics and Paralympics from the biggest candidate pool in Games history, Liu Jian, head of the volunteer department at the Beijing Organizing Committee of Olympic Games, said Tuesday.

Beijing rail system set to double

Eleven subway and light rail lines will be under construction this year in Beijing, and two will be completed before the Olympic Games in August, officials from the municipal Development and Reform Commission said.

These projects will add 270 kilometers to the municipal rail system's track length, nearly doubling its current size.

(By Han Manman)

First smoke-free Chinese restr opens

By Li Fenghua

A Meizhou Dongpo branch at Liulitun will be the city's first Chinese restaurant to prohibit smoking – a prohibition already enacted by most of the city's Western restaurants.

Guo Xiaodong, the chain's general manager, said that change was made in preparation for the Olympic Games, whose organizers have called for creation of a smoke-free environment.

Each dining table has a small bulletin noting that smoking is forbidden, and there are posters with the message tacked to the walls.

When the customers enter the restaurant, attendants immediately inform them it is smoke free. Most customers finish their cigarette outside before entering, and only a few leave outright at the news, Guo said.

He said he expects the restaurant to make up for its loss of

smokers with an in-flow of concerned, pregnant women.

Wang Ying, a diner at the restaurant, said she was pleased with the decision.

"I feel violated when I dine in a smoking restaurant since I am forced to take in the cigarette smoke. I hope more and more non-smoking restaurants appear in Beijing; I think it is an international trend," she said.

Diner and smoker Li Jian-

guo said he can accept the restaurant's non-smoking act, and that it doesn't require that much control for a smoker to refrain from lighting up during his meal. It is unfair to non-smokers for smoking to be allowed in restaurants, he said.

The volume of business dropped 10 to 20 percent during the first two months, but it has made up the slack with an inflow of pregnant women and

non-smokers.

"We will convert more branches to be smoke free if the Liulitun location proves successful," Guo said.

According to the China Center for Disease Control, 90 percent of the city's Western restaurants prohibit smoking.

The mid-sized restaurant is located near Beijing Hospital of Gynecology and Obstetrics, Chaoyang District.

Hukou limits prompt girl's suicide

By Li Fenghua

The hukou system has drawn considerable criticism the last few years, but another damning blow was struck last Friday when hukou limitations sparked a 17-year-old girl's suicide attempt.

You Dandan, the girl, was denied registration for the college entrance exams because she lacked Beijing hukou.

The Xicheng district high school senior attempted to kill herself using a home-made toxic capsule containing sodium nitrate she took from the school lab.

Last Friday, the day exams opened to online registration, she swallowed the capsule. When her classmates discovered her attempt, she was immediately sent to the hospital.

As of press time, a hospital spokesman said she is out of danger.

You's father said she was born out of wedlock and her mother abandoned them several years ago. Since then, he repeatedly attempted to register the girl with Beijing hukou, but has failed since he cannot produce her mother's signature.

The hukou system has been

at the center of social controversy for several months. In the education arena, Beijing hukou can grant students admission to high-ranked colleges with lower test scores.

Wan Xin, Xicheng Police Station's chief of information, said the Beijing Bureau of Public Security is discussing You's case and will decide on its course of action soon.

Father of dead shooter demands compensation

By Gan Tian

Chen Zejun, 17, a member of Shanghai's skeet shooting reserve team was shot and killed by a teammate during a training accident on the afternoon of December 3, last year.

Chen Zejun's father Chen Yong demanded a 10-million-yuan compensation from the Shanghai Shooting and Archery Sport Center (SASC) last Saturday.

A few days after his son's death, the Shanghai SASC offered a compensation of 680,000 yuan. Chen Yong said the accident was caused by careless management of the center, and rejected the compensation arrangement.

Chen Yong asked for a "reasonable explanation" from the center and then discuss compensation issues. Chen Zejun's body has not been buried yet, and the disagreement with the center continues.

"What we want is our child instead of money! I'm demanding this only in order to give them a warning!" Chen Yong said to *The Mirror*.

According to shooting regulations, the muzzle of the gun is forbidden to be pointed at another person, even in training.

The SASC of China National Sports Administration has already begun to investigate the case. This is the first time an athlete was killed accidentally during training in the country.

Chen Zijun and his teammates were training at the Shanghai SASC in Minhang District, Shanghai. During a break, one of his teammates loaded what he thought was a blank and began joking with Chen, police said.

The gun discharged and the bullet struck Chen in the lower abdomen, police said. The Sport Center sent for doctors immediately, but Chen died two hours later in hospital from the fatal wound.

Shaolin temple to spend 300 million on new site

By Han Manman

Shaolin Temple, considered the birthplace of Chinese martial arts, plans to spend 300 million yuan on a new temple which will house the nation's biggest Buddhist college.

The new temple will be on the site of the Donglin Temple in Xingyang County, Zhengzhou, Henan Province, which was a temple for royal families during Ming Dynasty (1368-1683) and which predates the Shaolin Temple by 200 years.

Construction is expected to be completed within 10 years.

Shi Yongxin, CEO of the Shaolin Temple company and honorary abbot of Donglin Temple, said he hoped the plan will boost research opportunities and exchange programs for Buddhist studies in China.

The new temple will offer courses in literature, philosophy, logic, English and computing, as well as traditional studies such as calligraphy and Chinese medicine, Shi Yanruo, supervisor of the Shaolin Temple, said.

Most of the teachers will be monks and courses will be taught in three Buddhist schools tailored for mainland students, students from the Tibet Autonomous region and those from southeast-Asia countries like Thailand and Burma.

Besides preparatory classes and bachelor programs, the college will also offer a postgraduate open exclusively to monks.

The academy will be open to anyone in the world eager to pursue Buddhist spirit and studies.

Shi ruled out the possibility of the temple making an initial public offering on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange this week.

In previous reports, he said a business-oriented promotion of the Shaolin Temple and its renowned martial arts would help raise its reputation worldwide.



The "nail house" in Guangzhou was demolished.

Photo provided by Yangcheng Evening News

Judge orders 'nail house' hammered down

By Annie Wei

A four-story brick building in a vast Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, construction site was set for demolition Tuesday, based on the new Property Law passed last year.

Residents who refused to move despite vast construction beginning around their homes were a nationwide phenomena in 2007. These remaining homes were termed dingzihu, or "nail house," because the occupants were viewed as troublemakers.

In April, a Chongqing Municipality dingzihu community and a real estate developer came to an agreement and solved their disagreement outside court. Dingzihu in other provinces reportedly followed the same trend.

However, in Guangzhou Province, one village decided to sue its dingzihu residents for negatively affecting the community.

That which sticks up gets hammered down, and that was the case for the village dingzihu when a local court ordered residents to vacate within three days.

Li Yingkai, Li Yingguang, Li Zheming and Lu Yansheng, four dingzihu residents, decided to appeal the verdict because the court did not offer any compensation for the demolition.

However, their appeal was struck down by the Guangzhou Middle People's Court last week when the judge said the dingzihu affects the interests of the village and other villagers' legitimate rights. The land on which the dingzihu is built

belongs to the whole village.

The court ruled that dingzihu residents be compensated according to a payment plan approved by 98 percent of the village's voters in May and July last year.

Guangzhou media heralded the case as the first application of the property law passed by the legislature last March.

The dingzihu phenomenon was first recognized when images of a Chongqing community prompted debate over the new Property Law, which was aimed to guarantee private property rights.

Images of lone homes in empty construction sites were plastered on newspapers all over the country and were among top topics debated on Chinese Internet chat rooms.

'Trapped'



Yuan Hongwei

businessman secretly returns

Left without notice

Yuan is now back in his hometown of Liuyang, Hunan Province. However, his return was secretive. He left without notifying the London court. Even his daughter, who had just arrived in London to take care of him, did not hear the news until his father called her after safely back in China.

How did Yuan get into China without being stopped by British customs inspectors? Yuan told the *Changsha Evening News* that he did not break his bail conditions or disobey the court as his lawyer found very important evidence to support his leaving the country. He claimed the British police spelled his name incorrectly on the warrant. Yuan said the proper spelling of his name is "Yuan Hong Wei," but in the warrant it reads, "Yaun Hong Wei."

"Although British police confiscated one of my passports, I had another," Yuan said, adding that he was thankful for the spelling error as it kept him off the British customs office's blacklist.

An official surnamed Gao from Yuan's company, Hunan Magic Power Industrial, based in Liuyang, said the company planned to hold a news conference detailing Yuan's case yesterday, but canceled without giving a reason.

Open letter

After he came back, Yuan pub-



By Han Manman

Chinese businessman Yuan Hongwei, who was involved in a US extradition case and trapped in custody in the UK since last September, secretly returned to China last Sunday, four days before the London court's third hearing, which would have determined if Yuan could be extradited to the US or not.

If so, he would be the first Chinese national suspected of an intellectual property offense to be extradited to face charges in a US court. His return has made the case take a dramatic turn.

After learning of Yuan's exit, Peter Baranay, the president of ABRO Industries Inc granted an exclusive interview to *Beijing Today* yesterday. This is the first time the company has commented on the issue publicly.

The US headquarters of ABRO Industries Photos provided by Liu Jiqing

lished an open letter through Rednet, Hunan Province's biggest website. In the letter, Yuan wrote that he was lured into the US company's trap and "tricked" into traveling to London where he became the object of a US extradition request. "I was like a child who lost his mother. I despaired to the point of a near breakdown," Yuan wrote.

Yuan wrote that the UK and the US have very tight extradition cooperation, but he did not trust the fairness of the British courts and hoped they would understand his going absent without leave.

ABRO says Yuan is a coward

"Yuan has illegally absconded from the UK in clear violation of the bail conditions set by the court," Peter Baranay, the president of ABRO Industries, said.

It is the company's first public comment on the issue. "Both the US and English governments requested that ABRO not comment publicly about this issue during the extradition process as they believe in the rule of law and did not wish uninformed media speculation to taint the proceedings," Baranay said.

However, Yuan's surprise exit forced ABRO to comment.

Baranay said Yuan misused the system whenever it suited him and violated it whenever it asked him to be accountable. "He has refused to compete fairly in the world market and to behave honestly in the legal community," Baranay said.

When Yuan said he was trapped in to going to London, Baranay completely disagreed. "He was in no way 'trapped' into coming to London. He himself suggested a meeting in London, and I was there waiting to meet with him when he was

arrested." ABRO's lawyer Liu Jiqing said Yuan was arrested in London due to an arrest warrant issued two years ago by the US State of Louisiana.

Baranay said Yuan committed a crime in the US by importing illegal goods into the country. He did this with full knowledge of the illegality of his actions. Two impartial courts in the US issued criminal arrest warrants for his arrest.

"If he believed himself unfairly accused, he should have waived his right to object to extradition and made his case in the US. Instead, he delayed and manipulated the extradition process in the UK until he had a chance to flee back to China like a thief in the night. We will continue the legal battles," Baranay said.

The background

The request for Yuan's extradition is based on an arrest warrant of product counterfeiting issued two years ago by Louisiana.

Yuan is the owner of the Chinese chemical firm, Hunan Magic Power Industrial Company, based in Liuyang. He was accused of violating US trademark laws by producing and selling chemical products under the name of a US company.

US firm, ABRO industries, said it lost millions of dollars from the sale of these counterfeit products around the world.

However, Hunan Magic Power claimed it had a legitimate license to make products under the ABRO label.

Last September, Yuan went to the UK to resolve the trademark dispute between the two companies. However, he was arrested by the British police on his arrival at London's Heathrow airport and held in custody.

Girls say molested by doc

By Gan Tian

A Children's Hospital doctor Gu Chengsuo, 42, has been arrested for the alleged molestation of two girls, one six years old and another 12, on Tuesday.

Nightmare for the girls

At the beginning of this month, 12-year-old Xiao Yu (pseudonym) went to Children's Hospital to be treated for pneumonia. On Sunday afternoon, Yu sent an SMS to her mother, surnamed Zhou, and said "There was an uncle fondling me between my legs in the middle of the night." Zhou told *The Beijing Times* that Yu felt pain in her genitals, and when she opened her eyes, she discovered it Gu was molesting her.

When Gu noticed that the girl was awake he went away. However, not long after, Yu felt discomfort again and found the physician repeating the act. He did it three times last Saturday. On Sunday evening, after lengthy consideration, Yu told her mother.

In the SMS, Yu wrote, "He did the same thing to the girl,

Xiao Xue (pseudonym), who was sleeping next to my bed. Don't tell her. She is so young." Only then did Xue's mother realize that her daughter was also molested by the doctor.

Li, Xue's mother, said to *The Beijing Times*, "My child said her bed pal told her that the doctor was applying medicine to her genitals." Li went to ask Xue's doctor, knowing that he had not prescribed any such medicine for her.

Psychological trauma

The two girls were now receiving psychological treatment.

Zhou mentioned that, after she got Yu's SMS, she immediately thought of calling the police, but Yu said, "Please don't tell others. I'm so ashamed." Zhou said Yu now has trouble facing people and often looks down at the ground. She even sent her mother an SMS saying that she was not willing to go to school.

Xue and Yu were taken to Beijing Maternity Hospital and Xiehe Hospital for medical examinations. It was found that Yu's genitals were inflamed. The hos-

pitals suggested the girls be taken for professional forensic medical examinations.

Unsolved issues

Yu's mother said there were problems in the management of Children's Hospital.

"Where were all the nurses and staff on the night shift?" she asked. She said she would first care of her illness, and then prepare to sue the hospital.

She told *The Mirror's* reporter, "Actually my child told me in the afternoon that there was a person who fondled her hip at night, but I paid no heed. I thought this couldn't happen in a hospital."

Xue's mother said she could not sleep after the accident happened.

"I was on nightshift then. It was hot and Xue was lying in bed. After she woke up and found she wasn't wearing her trousers, I said no problem and walked away," Gu said.

"I like children. Otherwise I wouldn't have chosen to work at Children's Hospital," he said.

Nationwide pollution survey next month

(AFP) – The government will launch next month its first nationwide survey to identify pollution sources, Xinhua reported over the weekend.

The survey, to be completed in the first half of 2008, will assess sources of industrial, agricultural and residential pollution, Xinhua news agency quoted Zhou Shengxian, director of the State Environmental Protection Administration, as saying.

The results will be revealed in the first half of 2009, Zhou told a meeting of the State Council last Friday, Xinhua reported.

The data “will be an important basis for environmental protection” and “an impor-

tant step toward an environmentally-friendly society,” it quoted Vice Premier Zeng Peiyan as saying at the meeting.

The country's booming growth has ravaged its environment, with about 70 percent of waterways polluted and urban air quality among the worst in the world.

The Asian giant is second only to the US in greenhouse gas emissions blamed for climate change.

Zhou said the census results “will not be linked to any punishment or evaluation of the performance of local administrations,” calling on officials to provide “true, credible” data.

Comment

The State Council decided to launch the first ever national wide pollution census in response to complaints from experts about a lack of reliable statistics on the sources and extent of pollution and the number of remediation facilities, Zhu Jianping, deputy director of the First Nationwide Pollution-Source Census Work Office, said.

In preparation for the campaign, the central government allocated 737 million yuan, and the survey will cover 333 cities and 2,895 counties, Zhu said.

“Such pollution-source censuses will be conducted every 10 years,” he added.

Zhu said industrial pollution sources will be a focus of the survey. There are 1.5 million pollution sources in industrial production, but he estimates the actual number at

1.8 million.

Polluting industries that emit heavy metals, hazardous waste and radioactive waste will be monitored most closely. Other industries, including papermaking, petrochemicals, iron and steel, are also targets of the review.

Agriculture, aquaculture, plant raising and animal husbandry will also be targeted.

The Beijing government is conducting its own survey in response to the nationwide one.

The city's survey will investigate 82,000 sources of industrial, agricultural and residential pollution and pollution treatment facilities across the city, according to the pollution sources department.

(Agencies)

Gov to ban free plastic shopping bags

(Reuters) – Shoppers in China will have to pay for plastic bags at supermarkets and other retail stores as part of a nationwide crackdown on the environmentally damaging items.

The production, sale and use of plastic shopping bags thinner than 0.025 millimeters will be banned completely, the State Council posted on its website late Tuesday.

“Plastic shopping bags, due to reasons such as excessive use and inefficient recycling, have caused serious energy and resources

waste and environmental pollution,” the statement read.

“The super thin bags, those thinner than 0.025 millimeters, have especially become a main source of plastic pollution as they are easy to break and thus disposed of carelessly.”

The new rules will take effect starting June 1, the cabinet said. Shoppers may either pay for other bags or reuse old ones.

Producers and retailers failing to comply will be prosecuted under the product quality law, it said.

Voice

By Huang Daohen

This may be a first, but the country has finally taken the lead on a major environmental initiative and drawn world wide attention.

Australia to end plastic bags

Australia has followed China in announcing it plans to end plastic bag use in supermarkets, with its new environment minister saying yesterday that he wants a phase-out to start by the end of 2008.

“We would like to see the phase out implemented by 2008 ... that is absolutely critical,” Garrett said on Sky News.

– Melbourne Herald Sun, Australia

Ban inspires other cities

After the government announced its nation-wide plastic bag ban, City of Toronto officials agreed it was time to provide a disincentive to use bags in their city as well.

Mayor David Miller said the city is not considering an outright ban, but a small tax could be launched.

Premier Dalton McGuinty says a similar ban won't be imposed in Canada, but he does say the country's move is a reminder to the west to re-think its plastic dependency.

– Toronto Star, Canada

Bag ban to save 37 million barrels of oil

China uses more plastic bags than any

other country, with as many as 3 billion plastic bags consumed daily, a State Council spokesman said.

Each year, 37 million barrels of crude oil are used to produce plastic. The ban will help alleviate the country's oil shortage.

– Daily Mail, UK

Some environmental activists questioned China's move. Rather than impose new regulations, it might make more sense to push stores to find ways to encourage shoppers to stop using plastic bags in exchange for small rewards.

– Times, UK

Individual comment

It looks like China is now going down the same road the US did some years ago.

We are finally starting to learn from those mistakes. Let's hope the Chinese are smart enough to learn from ours!

– MJ, Iowa, US

While, whether it will sort out the problems or not, this is a good first step. Well-done, China!

– Cindy, London, UK

I don't know if we can completely ban plastic bags, but it would help if people would stop putting only one or two items in a plastic bag and if they would stop double bagging unless necessary.

– Helen Goldfarb, Toronto, Canada

Gov tackles online lottery corruption

(gig.com) – The Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Civil Affairs and the General Administration of Sports have issued a joint circular halting the online sale of lottery tickets.

The notice requires all companies currently involved in the sale of lottery tickets online to cease immediately, with penalties for those who fail to abide by the new rule.

The country has called a halt on online lottery sales in response to growing reports of corruption, with many online lottery vendors being accused of receiving payments from customers, but failing to purchase the tickets.

The move is a first step in bringing the rampant Chinese online lottery market under control, and not an attempt to enforce a permanent online sale ban.

Average lifespan is getting longer

(AFP) – The life expectancy of the country's 1.3 billion people is on the rise, thanks partly to increased spending on health care, Xinhua reported Monday.

The average life expectancy rose from 71 years in 2000 to 73 in 2005, Xinhua news agency reported, citing a report issued by the Ministry of Health.

Other health indicators have also shown marked improvement in recent years, including the infant mortality rate, which fell from 25.5 per 1,000 babies in 2003 to 15.3 last year, the report said.

The maternal mortality rate fell from 51.3 per 100,000 births in 2003 to 36.6 last year, it reported.

Fluorescent green Pig Year over

(Reuters) – A fluorescent green pig gave birth to two piglets which share their mother's transgenic characteristic after she mated with an ordinary pig, Xinhua reported.

The mother sow is one of the three fluorescent green pigs successfully bred by a research team in December 2006 after injecting fluorescent green proteins into pig embryos.

The mouths, feet and tongues of the two piglets glow green under ultraviolet light, which indicates the technology to breed transgenic pigs via cell nuclear transfer is mature, Liu Zhonghua, a professor at Northeast Agricultural University in Harbin, Heilongjiang Province, was quoted as saying.

This technology promises to breed excellent transgenic pigs and even raise special pigs to provide organs for human transplant operations in the future, Liu was quoted as saying.



Too early for Winter Games

The International Ice and Snow Festival opens today in Qipanshan in Shengyang, Liaoning Province. The Olympic-themed event, using over 500,000 cubic meters of snow, is composed of large ice sculptures, like the Athens Pantheon and the traditional Chinese dragon.

Xinhua Photo

Foreign investment in real estate probed

The State Administration for Industry and Commerce has decided to step up measures which prevent the influx of foreign capital into the real estate market.

According to a report by the *Shanghai Security News*, Monday, the administration is collecting information on foreign-owned properties.

China took a major stride to regulate its real estate market and stave off speculative investment

in early 2006. This included the move of raising the ratio of registered capital in property developers' overall investment and restrictions on residential property purchases by foreign institutions and individuals.

According to current policy, only foreign institutions establishing branches or representative offices in China and individuals working or studying in China for more than one year can purchase

apartments for personal use.

Foreign capital in real estate enterprises in China reached US \$53.9 billion in the first eleven months last year. This was 72 percent higher than a year ago.

China's real estate climate index rose 2.67 points to 106.59 in November from the previous year. This was despite a tighter monetary policy followed by the central bank to curb credit growth and investment in fixed assets.

This apart, the government is also concerned about lower housing affordability. In November, the government urged local authorities to reserve at least 70 percent of the land designated for residential construction for low-rent units or smaller, cheaper homes.

It is believed that the government may soon come out with further policies for the real estate sector.

(Agencies)

Spam King wanted for manipulating stock prices

By Huang Daohen

Alan Ralsky, 52, one of the world's most prolific spammers, was named in a 41-count indictment unsealed last Thursday in Detroit, Michigan, US, which alleges he and others defrauded people by manipulating Chinese stock prices.

Authorities did not disclose the details of the Chinese stocks.

According to the indictment, released last Thursday by US Attorney Stephen Murphy, Ralsky and ten other defendants sent millions of e-mail messages to computers around the world to inflate Chinese penny stocks, which they then sold.

The defendants used a variety of illegal tactics to evade spam-blocking devices and trick recipients into opening and acting on their advertisements, Murphy said.

The eleven defendants may face mail fraud and wire fraud charges, which could carry a sentence of 20 years in prison and a fine of US \$250,000, the Associated Press (AP) reported.

Ralsky's son-in-law Scott Bradley, 46, a West Bloomfield Township, Michigan, resident, and Judy Devenow, 55, a Lansing, Michigan, resident, were arraigned last Thursday on the charges. A third defendant, Hon Wai John Hui, 49, a resident of both Vancouver and Hong Kong, was arrested at John F Kennedy International Airport in New York.

The seven other named defendants remain at large, including Ralsky, who AP reported was attending a friend's wedding in Europe.

Ralsky, a West Bloomfield Township, Michigan, resident, has been the target of anti-spam efforts for years.

He reportedly earned US \$3 million in summer 2005 alone, according to data obtained by federal agents, who seized computers, hard disks and financial records in a raid that year.

However, Ralsky, who at the time admitted to having 150 million e-mail addresses, was not arrested.

Though the "spam king" may be dethroned, experts say the flow of unwanted e-mail will continue, and a true crackdown on spam requires public awareness.



The Morgan Stanley sign, as seen at their world headquarters in New York, US. Morgan Stanley's dumping of its stake in CICC has drawn worldwide concern over sovereign wealth funds.

Photo by Stephen Chernin/Getty Images

US financial services firm Morgan Stanley plans to sell its entire stake in China International Capital Corp (CICC), the nation's first investment bank, sources close to the two companies said on Monday.

The unnamed sources confirmed a report by Hong Kong-based Ta Kung Pao that the US investment bank plans to sell its stake in CICC and is in talks with private equity firms to find a buyer.

The two firms have agreed that the buyer of the stake cannot be an investment bank, the report said.

Morgan Stanley currently holds a 34 percent stake in CICC,

but with a limited role in the investment bank. The sources said the US firm might sell its entire stake in CICC and invest in another local brokerage.

Earlier in December, local media reported that the global financial services firm was planning to buy a 34 percent stake in Shanghai-based China Fortune Securities for 4 billion yuan.

The reports said Morgan Stanley had signed an agreement with China Fortune Securities to set up a joint venture investment bank and that Morgan Stanley might be interested in a controlling stake.

But under new rules issued by the China Securities Regulatory

Commission (CSRC) on December 28, the maximum stake foreign investors can hold in a local securities firm will remain at around 33 percent, despite lower barriers in other areas.

The CSRC's new rules issued on December 28 also require 1.2 billion yuan in net capital in the last year for a securities firm if it wants to set up a subsidiary.

Morgan Stanley is expected to become one of the first foreign firms to invest in a local securities firm in 2008, after the government resumed approvals of foreign joint ventures based on the China-US Strategic Economic Dialogue.

(Agencies)

Official response

unprecedented influence over other countries' commercial assets.

The developed world should not discriminate against sovereign wealth funds from developing countries or subject them to "financial protectionism", Wei Benhua, deputy head of China's State Administration of Foreign Exchange, said.

Wei characterized such worries as baseless in a writing in *China Business News* on Monday.

"The China Investment Corp drew the attention of international society as soon as it was established, with certain countries intentionally disseminating the view of Chinese investment as a threat," he wrote.



Wei Benhua

IC Photo

By Huang Daohen

China's recent attempts to generate better returns from its huge foreign exchange reserves draws worldwide concern. Critics claimed that the rise of sovereign wealth funds such as the US \$200 billion China Investment Corp (CIC) may give their opaque state masters

Cushioning the developed country slowdown

By Huang Daohen

Resilience in developing economies, such as China, will cushion the current slowdown in the US, according to the World Bank's Global Economic Prospects 2008 (GEP 2008) released Wednesday.

The phenomenon is driven in no small part by the East Asia and the Pacific Region, which grew by 10 percent last year. Growth for the region should ease to 9.7 percent this year and to 9.6 percent by 2009, the GEP 2008 predicts.

The expansion was powered by China's more than 11 percent gain, with other countries in the region growing at about 6 percent, the report's authors say.

More broadly, real GDP growth for all developing countries is expected to ease to 7 percent this year, while high-income countries are predicted to grow by a modest 2 percent, the World Bank said.

China Unicom unveils song download service

By Huang Daohen

China Unicom has begun to provide complete song download service for mobile phone users, the first such service in China.

The move has been hailed by some industry sources as the start of business in the 3G era.

But the *Beijing News* quoted an industry insider as saying such service will not be able to see rapid development until operators solve the music copyright issues and boost network speeds.

China Unicom is China's second largest mobile operator after China Mobile, which is also testing this new service.

New ANZ CEO arrives in capital

By Han Manman

During an official visit to China, Mike Smith, the newly-appointed CEO of the Australia and New Zealand (ANZ) Banking Group, said yesterday that China is forecast to account for around 75 percent of Asia's retail banking by 2012.

"We are the only Australian bank with a meaningful presence in mainland China and we want to build on that foundation," Smith said.

This is Smith's second visit since he was appointed CEO of ANZ last October. During this visit, he will meet with high level officials from the country's banking regulators, as well as senior management from key corporate clients.

Smith will travel to Tianjin to meet with key local government officials and the senior management from the Bank of Tianjin. ANZ owns a 20 percent stake in the Bank of Tianjin, as well as an almost 20 percent stake in the Shanghai Rural Commercial Bank.

Film shoot paralyzes city



By Huang Daohen

A film crew shooting a firefighting sequence during the morning rush hour on Monday in downtown Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, caused a mammoth four-hour traffic jam and triggered strong controversy among the local public.

The film, "Firemen," stars the TV actor Wang Baoqiang. The scene that particular day played out the firemen's heroic rescue of trapped office staff and took place at about 8am at the Jinye Plaza, located on the city's main road.

Smoke and fire billowed out of the plaza and eight fire engines were sent to the main road at the scene, leaving only one lane for

the congested traffic, according to the local *Southern Metropolis Daily* newspaper.

The narrow sidewalks were made even narrower by barricades, working staff and the fake firemen and police actors, the report said.

"The fire effects spread everywhere and some of the pedestrians had to bypass the road by way of the vehicle lane," Li Xiang, a passenger, said.

Some scared people even dialed 119, only to be told by the operator that it was just a film shooting.

The "firefighting" led to serious traffic congestion that day and the traffic was backed up for 7 kilometers. Many office workers were stuck in

their vehicles.

The staged fire was not extinguished until noon.

In addition to the traffic jam, the movie production also drew jeers from nearby residents. They claimed it affected daily life.

Besides, the vivid sound of the fire alarm caused psychological shock to some elderly people.

This is the third time the film crew has disturbed the peace since the shooting was launched last December. Wang Weihua, the film's producer, apologized in a letter on Tuesday to the public who were affected by the annoying movie project, and promised that similar incidents would not happen again.

Comment

Bad location

I understand the "firefighting" scene was necessary for the film, but why must the crew choose the busiest central part of the city during Monday's rush hour?

— Zheng Shuai, local resident

Disturbing the peace

From a legal point of view, this is an offence of the public order because the act disturbed the daily work and lifestyle of the majority of the community's people, and caused some damage.

What is worse, if the act violates the relevant provisions of the criminal law resulting in some serious damage to the public order, it could constitute a crime.

— Wang Silu, lawyer

Crying wolf

Should we dial 119 again next time we hear

a fire alarm? I really can not tell now what is real or not.

— Zhang Limin, local resident

Getting official approval

Did the film crew get approval from the local authority? Such a large-scale event should get approval and consent from the municipal government, urban management office, traffic police and other departments.

— Zhu Ping, commentator

Inconsideration

The film crew was totally inconsiderate. They should have handed out some kind of notice of the act to the nearby residents in advance. For the traffic jam, they should have turned to local authorities for help. The whole situation could have been avoided.

— Simon007, netizen

The make-believe "fire" caused a four-hour traffic jam in Guangzhou on Monday, triggering controversy among the public.

Photos provided by Beijing Youth Daily

Transformer substation breeds controversy

By Jackie Zhang

The construction of a 220 kilovolt high voltage transformer substation, covering 6,800 square meters, on the west side of the Wangjing area of Chaoyang district, recently drew public concern over its potential to affect the environment and people's health.

Monday afternoon, a meeting was held between government officials and residents. They did not reach an agreement. Most of the residents said that the substation should be removed from the area.

Construction of the transformer substation has stopped. According to residents, the substation's location was going to be used to build a kindergarten school. About half a month ago, some residents found the field was under construction to build a transformer substation.

"There was no advanced notice nor did we see any environmental impact assessment report," a resident representative said. He also said that, according to the local residents' measurements, the shortest

distance between the substation and residential building was only nine meters. "We'll suffer from harmful electromagnetic radiation."

At the meeting Monday afternoon, representatives from the Beijing Electric Power Corporation (BEPC), the Beijing Municipal Commission of Urban Planning (BMCUP), the Office of Letters and Calls of Chaoyang District (OLCCD) and the Environmental Protection Bureau of Chaoyang District (EPBC), attended.

"The planning examination, and approval were legal," Zhang, from the BMCUP, said. "There was never any problem with the substation's planning." The staff from the BEPC said the substation had passed environmental impact examinations. The possible radiation was far below the country's standards and it wouldn't influence people's lives.

But residents had a different opinion. Several said that the regulations and standards being implemented by the EPBC were

made in the 1980s. According to the current standards of the World Health Organization, the examination results are worse than the standards set back then. A resident who has a doctor's degree in the electromagnetic and micro wave field said that the substation would also cause corona discharge, insulator discharge and low frequency noise, which could all harm the human body.

At bbs.wangjing.cn, residents are posting various posts on harmful influences brought about by substation radiation naming experts they can ask for help. The residents committee is calling for people's signatures and donations to stop the construction of the substation. Some residents also posted an article providing officials several alternative choices in lieu of building the substation.

Wang, vice director of the OLCCD, said construction of the transformer substation would not be started until an agreement was reached.

Comment

Expert advice is needed

I think there are other locations for the substation. Experts should carry out professional examinations on new locations. What we need to do is not only express our opinions, but offer suggestions and solutions as well.

— Sarah, a resident representative

Kindergarten question

Another key point with the substation dispute is whether or not the field was originally being groomed for a new kindergarten. We saw from the blueprints that a kindergarten school was planned. When did the real estate developer change the layout? They should have notified us and ask for our consent.

— xding026

Potential risks

As residents and officials have different opinions on the radia-

tion standards, I think, it shows that there are risks. Another potential danger is the explosion factor. There were similar explosion cases in Russia and Guangzhou, Guangdong. The Shanghai government stopped the construction of a substation next to a kindergarten. Related government departments should reconsider the issue.

— academic discussion

Make it safe for children and elders

There are lots of children and elders living in the area. Older people like to go out for a walk or talk with friends and children usually play games outside. If the substation is constructed, we cannot imagine what might happen to these individuals. Children and old people are more likely to be influenced. It mustn't be built near any residential area.

— apple tue

Combining ballet and contemporary dance



Akram Khan

By He Jianwei

Three dancers from the renowned National Ballet of China (NBC) will perform with five dancers from the British Akram Khan Company in the world premiere of *bahok* at Beijing's Tianqiao Theatre on January 25.

It is the first time that an independent dance company from the UK has collaborated with the National Ballet of China.

To share their experience of international dance partnership, a round table discussion between Khan, Chinese dance professionals and arts practitioners was held last Friday afternoon at the NBC.

The discussion examined the creation and production of *bahok*, multi-arts-discipline collaboration and the cutting edge culture and arts development in London and Beijing.

Where is home

Bahok, a Bengali word meaning "carrier", includes nine international dancers from countries including China, South Korea, India, South Africa and Spain.

After four weeks working with the dancers, Khan came up with the concept of observing the meaning of home in the context of globalization.

"In the first two weeks, I tried to collect personal stories from the dancers. I found that the Chinese dancers missed home very much," he said.

Khan is British-Bengalese. He has always wondered where his home is and what home

means. He grew up on a street in London that was also home to two Chinese families, an African family and a Spanish family.

"When I was eight, all the children went to the same schools. If we went to a Chinese students' house, it was like going to China," Khan said.

But when he came back to Bangladesh, he found that it was not the same in his parent's house. "We have to maintain our individual culture as well as having a universal connection," he said.

When Khan asked the dancers what their connection to home was, they told him it was their mobile phones. "If we use machines to connect to home, who controls whom?" he said.

Mixing it up

Khan is an acclaimed choreographer and male dancer, renowned for his inter-cultural, inter-disciplinary collaborations and for challenging conventional ideas of traditional dance forms.

The collaboration with the National Ballet of China represents a continuation of Khan's interest in combining different dance traditions to create a new and original dance vocabulary.

After he saw the NBC's Ballet, *Raise the Red Lantern*, Khan decided to co-operate with the NBC. "The subtleness and sensibility in their movements was something I hadn't seen in other ballets," he said.

In his career, he has had a lot of collaborations with people in different fields. During the round table discussion, he

recalled his unhappiness and happiness in working with superstars.

When he first got together with Steve Reich, he offered some musical suggestions to him. "Reich screamed for 15 to 20 minutes in his hotel. He told me, 'I give you the music. I don't want you to interfere with my music,'" he said.

Khan will join Tan Dun, an Oscar-winning Chinese musician, in 2009. When he first met Tan in Lyons, he was rehearsing. "He asked for my suggestions on costume and light," he said.

Creating boundaries

Previously, Khan learned about Indian classic dance. He

thought that Indian dance and ballet have clear boundaries. "If you simply change the direction of your hand, it's no longer the Indian classic dance," he said.

However, contemporary dance has no boundaries. "I want to create new boundaries for each dancer," he said.

He asked the dancers to describe their ideas about home, dreams and nightmares. Then, he created the stories according to each dancer's character. "Dancers are not actors, as actors have their own techniques. Dancers must show their own individual character," he said.

Director's play blesses the Olympics

By He Jianwei

Peter J Wilson, one of the directors of Sydney Olympic Games Opening Ceremony, led Chinese actors in a children's play at the China Children's Art Theater (CCAT) last Thursday.

Wilson was invited in 2007 from the CCAT to direct *Twelve Zodiacs*, a children's play based on twelve zodiac animals, which will debut on February 7.

Harmony between beings and beasts

Twelve Zodiacs tells the story of a child meeting 12 animals and gaining different qualities from each.

"The child takes on different characteristics such as patience and a sense of humor from the animals. All the qualities help share the child's personality when she grows up," Wilson said.

Children are learning all the time, so he decided to tell a story about the relationship between children and animals. "We can give a positive attitude to our children. Human beings and animals can live harmoniously together," he said.

Chinese elements modernized

When Wilson's first visited China 20 years ago and was fascinated by the Chinese culture. He enjoyed Peking Opera and a puppet show last week in Beijing. "I have watched Peking Opera performances at least five times," he said.

In the play, he made one of the animal characters "Dragon" like a figure from the famous opera. "I think both of them look rigorous," he said.

He will also adopt four treasures from Chinese culture, including the brush, ink store, ink slab and paper. There will be a scene of writing a Chinese character, "Long" (dragon), using the four treasures.

He believes that bamboo is a typical symbol of China. "In ancient times, all things were made of bamboo, such as the



Peter J. Wilson

Photo provided by the China Children's Art Theater

bowls, desks, brushes and even paper," he said.

However, Wilson will bring modern techniques to his show. The play has no words and all elements will be presented through visual effects, acting and music.

The directors draw on the opening ceremonies

Wilson co-directed the Sydney Olympic Games Opening Ceremony in 2000. He believes the opening ceremony is a good opportunity to display a country's culture and history to the world.

Wilson believes the most important part of Beijing's Opening Ceremony is color. "Australia has an indigenous culture and green and golden brown are typical colors. While in China, I noticed the country is full of many colors. Maybe red and gold are the dominant shades here," he said.

He also thought traditional Chinese instruments should be used in the ceremony's music. "The costumes will be one of the highlights of the ceremony and, of course, the massive people," he added.

Come together with culture

By Jackie Zhang

Culture is the best means to overcome obstacles between countries and people, and to open a bridge for communications, Martin Davison, CEO of the British Council, said Tuesday. People in the UK, as well as other countries, were becoming more and more interested in China, he said.

It was during the forum, "Communicating Across Cultures: The Arts Shape World-Views," organized by the British Council that Davison expressed his opinions. Besides Martin Davison, several Chinese experts also participated and shared their thoughts.

As CEO of the council, Davison works in London. He has watched the British fascination with Chinese culture grow in recent years.

He gave the China's Terracotta Army Exhibition at the British Museum as an example. "The museum has to extend the exhibition time to midnight every day, because there are so many people coming to see it. The scale of the display is the biggest in London. But we want to see more. We not only want to know about Chinese art heritage in the first Century, we also want to know what Chinese artists are doing in the 21st Century," he said.

Another example given by Davison was the British Council inviting photographers to take pictures reflecting the Muslim people's life in the UK. "These photographers were not limited in what aspects they shot. We didn't control them or guide them, so some of their pictures reflected negative views. This exhibition caused wide discussion. It successfully reflected the real lives of these people in every aspect in the UK. It was also welcomed in the Mid-East region. Visitors in the region could see that the exhibition was not an official propaganda move. They never realized that there were so many Muslim groups in the UK, nor did they know that the British government supported their churches. Of course, it was also an adventure for us to hold such an event. But it really brought many benefits," Davison said.

Over the past 70 years, the British Council had been involved in different cultural events in the world like the Venice Biennale and the Edinburgh Arts Festival. "We want to build up a bilateral long-term friendly relationship between countries in cultural fields. In the stream of globalization, every country will rely on other countries more and more. We should establish a trustworthy channel amongst people all over the world."

China will provide more for the whole world, which in turn, will increase people's knowledge of the country, he said. "It is worth it for us to take some risks," he said.



Nine dancers from different cultures seek the true meaning of home.

Photos provided by National Ballet of China

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Experience Chinese culture in a nice setting



The Hutong has a wonderful roof for people who want to learn Tai Chi or Yoga.

Photo provided by Mark Thirlwall

By Annie Wei

Want to learn Chinese cooking or know more about the Chinese culture? Need to find people who have the same interests? These are frequent questions posed by newcomers to Beijing.

A culture exchange workshop named "The Hutong" is becoming known by more and more expats in town as a place with a nice ambience to learn about Chinese teas, Chinese cooking and preventative Chinese medicine.

Mark Thirlwall, 30, an Australian who has lived in Beijing for four years was helping design itineraries for educational tourists based on educational themes within China for inbound tourists.

"I was always looking for an interesting space in Beijing to run workshops in an environment conducive to information exchange and learning, to help bring foreigners closer to the Chinese culture," Thirlwall said.

Some of the five-star hotels in town offer similar courses, but Thirlwall thinks that the Hutong is no better or worse.

Nice hutong ambience

Thirlwall's Hutong workshop is between Dongzhimen and Beixinqiao, south of the popular food street.

To many people, hutong living is suffering due to lack of proper heating and sewage drainage. Thirlwall and Shine did all the renovations and turned a shabby place, formerly rented to a dozen low-income workers, into a nice spot for people to visit and enjoy. It took seven months.

From the outside, it's just like any other residence. There is only a stamp-sized "The Hutong" sign at the gate.

Stepping inside, the courtyard has been transformed into three comfortable, traditional and modern rooms: one for Chinese cooking with work tables including woks and tools for 14 people; one for Chinese tea ceremonies and the other open format space is flexible with different things, from lectures on Daoist Arts to regional Chinese tofu pairing.

The best section is the rooftop, with wooden floors and a wonderful view.

When asked whether it would be a good idea to sell drinks on summer nights here, Thirlwall balked. "We are absolutely not interested in running a bar or restaurant," he insisted.

"We plan to have yoga and Tai Chi classes on the roof. Yoga classes kick off in March in our biggest room with thick mats," he said.

So far, there is a total of 10 teachers who speak English well.

The popularity of Chinese cooking

The Chinese cooking class is quite popular. Beginners learn how from the basics up. If they want to learn more, Hutong can arrange three or four Chinese dishes from different regions.

The most popular event is Hook and Cook – "hook up with friends and cook up a storm." It's a bit like the "Mad Hatters Tea Party" from *Alice in Wonderland*. All guests invited are paired with someone they don't know, given a recipe to prepare, and have to ready the dish for everyone else attend-

ing the party. Prior to eating, every team is given the chance to "sell" their dish by talking about its history and speciality.

"Some teams go wild with what they say about their dishes to earn themselves points," Thirlwall said. Some people have joined in the same event four times for a great time and good food.

More activities planned for spring

The workshop started in September last year. Within a short time, there were many things Thirlwall and Shine needed to work on and improve.

Thirlwall said they are not making any money and pulling the place together forced them to deal with many unexpected inconveniences only found in hutongs.

"For example, the electricity was cut off today because the old cable just rotted," Thirlwall said.

January and February are not busy seasons due to holidays and cold weather. More outdoors events are expected in March.

Every Sunday, Huadan, a NGO aimed at helping migrant workers, will use the place to educate and aid migrant workers, helping some of them make a transition into the service industry.

Thirlwall said that there would be a permanent exhibition about hutong culture and history in March. They will not only invite scholars to speak, but also offer an opportunity to have newly-trained migrant workers in paid positions teach foreigners the history and working life of Beijing hutongs.

"What better way to give people more confidence than that," Thirlwall said.



Veggies rocking night!

Photo provided by CVU

Rock on with vegetables!

By Gan Tian

The rock and roll concert dubbed, "Don't eat our friends and save the bears," was held at 13Club Sunday evening. Local famous bands, Tiantang, Buyi, Zhonglifeng and Youzhi Dadou, showed up to promote the newest fad: vegetarianism.

Protecting animals

Beijing was the third stop on the tour. Sponsored by the Chinese Vegetarian Union (CVU), the Animals Asia Foundation (AAF) and the rock band, Youzhi Dadou, the concert was mainly aimed at calling attention to the protection of animals and promoting vegetarianism.

"We have been working on this project for a long time. This is the first time we have connected vegetarianism to a specific animal," Zhu Ke, PR manager of AAF, said. Zhu and the foundation noticed that there were cases of bears being raised in cages for their bile in China, which is illegal in most foreign countries.

"What we are trying to do right now is to let the public know that it is cruel and make it illegal in China, and we promote it through the idea of vegetarianism," he said.

"There is a connection between vegetarianism and protecting animals. I love animals so I don't eat them. That's how I became a vegetarian," Xie Zheng, lead vocalist of the band, said.

A trendy lifestyle

Huang Ying, the president of CVU, said there were over a million vegetarians in Beijing and over 10 million in China.

"It is hard to give specific numbers in China, but the figure is growing," Huang said. In Beijing, there are four groups of vegetarians: patients, environmentalists and animal-rights activists, certain religious practitioners and classical culture promoters.

"Vegetarians tend to be younger and more modern. Vegetarianism is a popular trend nowadays," Huang said.

She said vegetarianism does not only exist in cuisine, but also it is a lifestyle. There are already clothes made from fibers instead of animal skins and environmentally-friendly hotels.

"We stress the idea more than actually pushing people to act," Huang mentioned, "It is like a LOHAS lifestyle, except it has stricter dining rules."

Almost all the Youzhi Dadou band members are vegetarians. Xie started the green adventure five years ago. "First it is a healthy way of eating and it lets you enjoy a simpler life. Simply the best," he said.

Targeting public welfare

Huang mentioned many vegetarians were people with strong social responsibilities. Many participate in a lot of volunteer work.

Youzhi Dadou staged the concert for free and will continue the tour at their own expense in order to raise public concern for the mistreated bears. All of the concert's logo design work was done by vegetarian volunteers.

Many others gather frequently to help the society understand the importance of environmental protection.

"For many people, vegetarianism is a combination of fashion and social responsibility. Actually we are promoting a spirit – caring for each other," Huang said.

Team Beijing beats team Beijing PLA
Wednesday night at the National
Indoor Stadium.

Photo by Liu Ying



Semis Roundup Beijing, Jiangsu ease to finals

The semifinals of the "Good Luck Beijing" 2008 Handball Tournament concluded Wednesday night as both Beijing and Jiangsu Province sent their teams into the men's and women's finals to be held tomorrow.

On the women's side, Beijing beat the Beijing PLA, double winners of the 2007 National Champions Cup and National Championship. The

score in the first half was close with each side playing well in the front court. Tying at 15 all into the second half, PLA had two players fouled out in the 15th minute and Beijing grasped the opportunity to keep ahead 24-20 before pulling off the win 30-27.

In the other women's semi, Jiangsu erupted for a 7-0 run in the second period to beat Anhui 32-24.

On the men's side, group prelims leaders Beijing first took on Guangdong. The two teams had confronted in the heats, tying at 35 all. But Beijing played better in the evening as they led 19-16 after half time and gained double-figures advantage in the 20th minute in the second half. The host team eliminated any suspense early to wrap up the

win 44-33.

The last game on Wednesday was between Jiangsu and Beijing PLA with the former setting a 10-point advantage after 30 minutes and finishing the lopsided match with a 30-18 victory.

The finals and third-place deciders will be held at the National Indoor Stadium tomorrow.

(From handball official website)

Handball in China

By Annie Wei

The "Good Luck Beijing" 2008 Handball Tournament opened last Saturday and will last seven days.

From the opening date to Tuesday, the tournament is being held at the Olympic Sports Center Gymnasium, then it will move to the National Indoor Stadium.

The tournament brings together four men's and four

women's teams in competition.

However, to most Chinese people, handball is a unfamiliar event.

Handball was introduced to China from Russia in 1955. Later, Chinese handball teams earned several impressive results in the worldwide competitions. However, after ranking No 5 in the Atlanta Olympic Games in 1996, the team's per-

formances started to falter.

In Asia, the South Korean handball team has always been considered the strongest. China's handball team has been directed by South Korean coaches since 1987.

Peng Ning, the China handball coach, said they decided to learn more from observing the European handball teams for more advanced research and

study in the sport.

During this tournament, all athletes are taken care of, especially with medical services. The medical team works closely together and gave professional performances when dealing with illnesses and injuries of athletes and venue workers.

More medical service members will be added for the Games in August.

Comment

By Annie Wei



I just arrived in Beijing from Shanxi Province a few days ago. It is my first time to see the Olympic stadium sites. I think they are well-built and very modern. Some are quite creative. If I have more time, I will see more of the "Good Luck Beijing" series.

Hao Xiaopeng, 24, Beijing Dengfeng Decoration and Engineering



It is a pity that we are not allowed to enter the sites. I can understand that because the stadiums are not completely finished yet, but I think they should offer half an hour or one hour per day for visitors.

Xun Wei, 24, Beijing Dengfeng Decoration and Engineering



We are volunteers for the handball tournament. The stadium is very pretty. We have trained hard.

Liu Fei (left), 19, and Qi Yuan, 19, students at Renmin University

Photos by Wei Ying

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Umbrella ...

Big city opens like an umbrella

Du Haibin's "Umbrella" ... was nominated for the Horizons Documentary Prize at the 64th Venice Film Festival in 2007.

In his film, Du followed five groups of people, including workers, farmers, soldiers, students and sellers, who were part of Chinese society in the 1950s but still exist.

In Zhangshan, Guangdong Province, he filmed many young farm workers working day into night, repeating monotonous tasks like manning machines to make umbrellas. "Numerous umbrellas in various colors and styles are made by them, but they have no idea how much an umbrella earns for others," Du said.

In Yiwu, Zhejiang Province, he filmed umbrella sellers at a wholesale warehouse. And advantageous geographic location gives Yiwu an opportunity to become the foreland between "World Factory" and "World Market." It has become the so-called "world largest small commodity market." "Now they have become nouveaux riches, and their lifestyles have changed completely. There seems to be no relationship now between 'farmers' and their current status," he said.

He turned to Shanghai, where the college students were looking for part-time jobs. More and more high school graduates may go to college while more farm

families are in an awkward situation due to expensive tuition fees for their children. Furthermore, "they have to face a crueler reality after graduation from universities: no job means going back to the countryside, so all their previous efforts were wasted," he said.

Another way for the farmer's children to survive is to join the army. Then he filmed inside a garrison. "It is unnecessary for their families to bear their living expenses; on the contrary, they can receive soldier's allowances," he said.

In the last episode he focused on the farmers in Luoyang, Henan Province. All young farmers have left for working in other cities; only the children, women and elder people are still living here. There was a serious drought during the early wheat-growing period and it affected the harvest of wheat. Only the rumble of reaping machines continuously draws people's attention, it is time to harvest and prepare the money for machine rental fees. Young people returning from cities for temporary assistance leave quickly again.

"Farming is the basis for Chinese life. Currently, those farmers accustomed to farming have moved to Chinese cities where most flourishing economies open like an umbrella!" he said.

By He Jianwei

Over the past two decades, ideas about money underwent changes. People began with "money from savings" which shifted to "money from earnings," and later, "money from loans." Their idea of income also changed from "money is to be saved," to "money is to be spent," and then, "money is to be spent on consumption." CNEX, short for, "Chinese



Is the reflection of the high buildings a reflection of prosperity?

Duckweed

Rich without roots

Peng Hui focuses his camera on one person's change from poor to rich, which reflects the spiritual life of people getting rich first.

Twenty years ago, Wu Yu came to Shenzhen with his dream. Earning only 300 yuan a month by huckstering unmarketable beverages with his bike under the burning sun, he never expected to be a billionaire.

For many "rich people" in Shenzhen, their paths to wealth two decades ago came from nothing more than smuggling, stock markets or property market speculation. Wu Yu followed a similar path. A decade ago when he was penniless in Shenzhen, he made a killing in the then unregulated Chinese stock market. Later he turned to the real-estate industry, in which he became a billionaire very quickly.

He said, "In China, I will not do unlawful things, but I will never be a law-abiding citizen. Violators of the law are imprisoned and law-abiders

do not make any money."

He became rich and well known in Shenzhen. He was even on the board of a famous university. He made a lot of money from investments. He chose to invest in low-budget movies.

On April 8, 2007, the 43rd birthday of Wu Yu, he was invited to invest, became the opening movie of the 43rd Shenzhen International University Film Festival. However, the festival was apparently not for him, as the actors and actresses were not investors of this film, Wu Yu left without making any contacts for film distribution.

Bright and over-confident, Wu Yu was once a famous actor. However, he missed a fantastic opportunity despite his past successes playing the role of a rich man.

He got drunk once and with tears in his eyes, he said, "Peng Hui, now I'm rich, but I have no roots like duckweed."

the jungle

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se Next," is

a NGO which promotes documenta-
ries of the Chinese people and to help
preserve the development history of
the Chinese people at the beginning
of the 21st century in order to serve
as a memoir. CNEX brought eight doc-
umentaries produced in 2007 reflect-
ing the value of money in the life of
ordinary Chinese people and showed
them at Tsinghua University from last
Friday to Tuesday.

young farm worker makes umbrellas in
Hongshan, Guangdong Province.

Shenzhen's business circles and served
e wanted to get involved in cultural
budget films and operate a KTV.
ay of Wu Yu, a film in which he
at the Tianjin Location of China
ne applause of the students was
nd actresses were the stars. As the
t being noticed and did not follow

is always proud of his judgment.
unity in the bull market last year,
stocks.
in his eyes, Wu Yu told the direc-
e no roots. I float in Shenzhen just

The businessmen in Anhui Province formed
a kind of dynamic balance between agri-
culture, countryside and farmers as well as
the environment in Chinese history.

Way of Fortune

The cost of prosperity

A piece of news about a toy company
CEO's suicide in Foshan, Guangdong Prov-
ince, because of a massive US recall was
the opening scene in the "Way of For-
tune." In following scenes, the film dis-
cusses the prosperity and ignored peril for
the world factory.

Director Chang Chaowei believed the
concept of a well-off society or common
wealth which used to be the prerequisite of
the economic boom had been overlooked,
the discrepancies between rural and urban
areas enlarged, the gap between the rich
and the poor widened and the environ-
ment worsened.

The film reviews the history and cul-
ture of Chinese people's fortune making.
For the last 1,000 years or so, business-
men from Fujian and Guangdong Prov-
inces have been integrated into the global
market. With great creativity, they have
played the role of middleman in dealing
with businessmen from various cultural
backgrounds, thus becoming major players
in global trade.

"The historical reality has formed the
foundation of the current wealth of the
Chinese people, but at the same time,
has brought problems related to natural
resources, brands, rural area and the ecol-
ogy in the process of following western
industrial civilization and becoming pros-
perous," Chang said.



The incomes of Beijing's taxi
drivers do not match the status
of the city.

Other films

My Last Secret

Li Xiaofeng and Jia Kai tell a
story of a grandmother writing a
will that decrees all her money go
to the local university for a scholar-
ship in Suzhou, Jiangsu Province.

While the woman is sick and
has an unclear mind, her caretaker
makes her write a note promising
her 20,000 yuan. The grandmother
is hospitalized several times and
lots of valuable furniture is taken
away by her niece, which makes
the caretaker envious. So, she and
the niece begin to bad-mouth each
other in front of the old woman.

Brave Father

Li Junhu follows a father and
son in Xi'an. To pay his son's living
expense and tuition, the father
sells off all the valuable things in
his home and comes to work in
Xi'an to make money.

The father keeps a notebook, in
which he enters records of his bor-
rowings. Most of them are small
sums of 10 or 20 yuan. He also
notes his expectations for his son:
"Around the year 2013 or so, when
I'm roughly in my sixties, Shengli
(the son) will take our family to
Beijing for a sightseeing visit. We
will have plenty of money by then."

Card Boom

Taiwan director Lin Hongjie
traces the consumption experi-
ences of two extreme individuals
and takes the audience on a tour
to explore the credit card phe-
nomena in Taiwan: Zheng Sanhe,
the first Taiwanese "card slave" to
successfully apply for bankruptcy;
Yang Huiru, the first Taiwanese
"card legend" who made a killing
from a loophole in the credit card
point program.

Taxi-A Moving Life with Chinese

Zhu Jie focuses on taxi drivers in
several cities: in Beijing, the incomes
of tax drivers do not match the status
of the city; in Chengdu, Sichuan
Province, the city is wellknown for
its relaxing and cozy atmosphere,
but for taxi drivers, hardship can
not be avoided; in Taipei, an indige-
nous driver in his sixties still tries to
earn money for his children; in Hong
Kong, many tax drivers also volun-
teer as traffic controllers.

All's Right With the World

King Wai Cheung tells a story
about five poor families in Hong
Kong. Their tragic fates are so
intriguingly different in approach
but equal in effect, making the audi-
ence wonder who's who and what
are the relationships between them.

Photos provided by CNEX

The human condition and all that jazz

Two things stopped when Tony Cicoria, a 42-year-old surgeon, was hit by lightning in 1994: his heart and his love of rock music. Resuscitated and back to work, Cicoria was suddenly possessed by classical music. He bought a piano and banged away at the songs swimming in his head, seemingly from nowhere.

While viewing his condition as a blessing and refusing to submit to a brain scan, other musical artists are not. Scans have shown that musicians are wired a little differently – whether that is due to years of practice or some inborn ability remains to be seen.

It is cases like Cicoria's that inspired Oliver Sacks's latest exploration into the human mind, *Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain* (400

pp, Knopf, US \$15.60). Sacks has done much to develop a rare genre over the years, the clinical tale, with a compassion and humanity not afforded it by many other authors. While stories set in hospitals are hardly new, he spins case studies into neurological narratives that put the reader in the triumphs and tragedies of a mind only a few steps outside the boundaries of what is considered "normal."

In Sacks's stories, the only thing separating the reader from the character are a few chemicals.

The book explores case studies of people with various gifts and disorders, and how music plays a key role in their lives. For example, people with Williams syndrome, a disorder that gifts people with sociability, liveliness, storytelling ability and the vocabulary to express it, but with an IQ less than 60. People who have the syndrome respond to music from an early age, but are not necessarily musically talented.

Using clinical expertise, Sacks examines people with "amusia," a disorder which makes a symphony sound like clattering pots and pans, musical savants and a man with a memory span of seven seconds – at least for everything but music. He explores the "brain worm" phenomena of how catchy tunes can replay in the

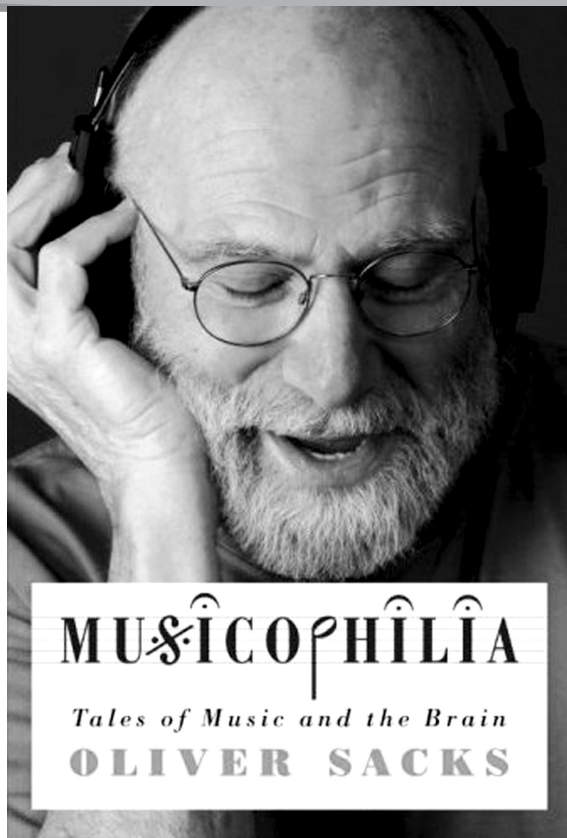
head for hours, and how some people have musical hallucinations day and night.

But aside from the downers, he examines the amazing abilities of music to inspire action in Parkinson's patients who cannot normally move, help patients who have survived a stroke to have a voice, calm Alzheimer's and even speed along recovery in hospitals with "singing therapy."

As in all his books, the case studies aim to leave the reader a bit more sensitive to the complexities of the human condition.

Whether you are tone deaf and can't keep a beat, or if you have perfect pitch and correct metronomes, *Musicophilia* offers an interesting look into an essential part of the human experience that science is only now beginning to tackle.

(By Derrick Sobodash)



Bookworm book listing

Ten years to make his dream come true

By He Jianwei

Ang Lee is one of the greatest contemporary filmmakers, and while everyone knows his achievements in film, few know the obstacles he overcame during his rise to fame.

Ten Years, My Movie Dream: Biography of Ang Lee (Shinian Yijiao Dianying Meng, by Zhang Jingbei, 316 pp, The Peoples Literature Publishing House, 38 yuan) is the first biography of Ang Lee. Its author, a senior journalist in Taiwan Province, interviewed Lee intermittently and worked together with the director in the weeks after he completed *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*.

The biography is written in first person and covers Lee's life from childhood to his making of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. The book, first published in Taiwan five years ago, saw its

first publication in simplified Chinese last October.

"I came up with the book's title after waking up in my Los Angeles home one morning. Tang poet Du Mu once wrote, '10 years I dreamed a dream in Yangzhou, and made my fame as a Casanova.' For a traditional Chinese person, the movie industry seems a vanity fair with ridiculous things happening all the time. To me, a good movie is the true vision that points to deep inside people's hearts," Lee wrote.

Born in 1954 in Pingdong, Taiwan, Lee failed the college entrance exams twice. After he graduated from the National Taiwan College of Arts in 1975, Lee went on to receive a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in Theater Direction from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a Masters in Film Production from New York University (NYU).

After graduating from NYU, he wrote several screenplays, but it was six years before he would direct *Tui Shou* (*Pushing Hands*), a dramatic-comedy reflecting on generational conflicts and cultural adaptation that was centered on the metaphor of the grandfather's Tai-Chi technique of "Pushing Hands."

"From my experience, you get better results with more effort. When I had success, I felt like it was my destiny. However, if you don't push to claim that destiny, there is still another possible outcome, which in a way is also your destiny," he told Zhang.

Lee wrote an introduction for the simplified Chinese edition, where he talks about the five years since *Crouching Tiger, Brokeback Mountain* and his latest *Lust, Caution*.



Jenny Niven from the Bookworm has the lowdown on three of the newest releases listed at the Sanlitun cafe.

Beijing: From Imperial Capital to Olympic City

By Lillian Li, Alison Dray-Novey and Haili Kong, 321 pp, Palgrave Macmillan, 225 yuan

This is the first English-language book to trace the city's history from its earliest days. It highlights recent changes in the city as its 15 million people live through record-level economic growth and intense preparations for the 2008 Olympics. Extensive photographs and paintings offer a window into Beijing's major phases of the past and its startlingly-different present. Compelling and revealing, Beijing arrives just in time for the city's Olympic turn.

One Night in Beijing

By Immersion Guides, edited by Adam Pillsbury, 232 pp, Immersion Guides, 240 yuan

From dusk to dawn on

August 8 and 9, 2007, exactly one year before the start of the Games, 35 of Beijing's most talented photographers fanned out across the city.

Their mission was to create a composite portrait of the buzzing metropolis and its residents. In this book, photographs capture the beauty, energy, faces and fleeting possibilities of one night in Beijing.

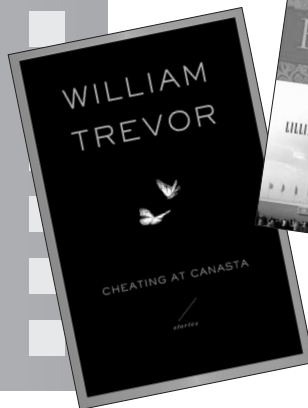
Cheating at Canasta: Stories

By William Trevor, 240 pp, Viking Penguin, 275 yuan

From a chance encounter between two childhood friends to the memories of a newly widowed man to a family grappling with the sale of their ancestral land, Trevor examines with grace and skill the tenuous bonds of relationships, the strengths that hold us together and the truths that threaten to separate us. Subtle yet powerful, his stories linger with

readers long after words have been put away.

(By He Jianwei)



Wake me when the New Year is here

By Gan Tian

The alarm clock has been around forever, but each year it gets a couple of new upgrades. If crawling out of bed to face the new year has been difficult, how about replacing your ancient buzzer with a flying clock or artificial sunrise? A load of new innovations are available for the new year.



Puzzle alarm clock

This puzzle alarm clock has a creative way to force its victim to wake up. When the alarm sounds, it cannot be stopped by pushing a button – you have to complete the puzzle on top of the clock or it will not stop ringing. Consider this one exercise for your brain.

Available: taobao.com
Price: 118 yuan



Accurian iPod alarm clock

This alarm clock is a low-cost alternative and looks very unique. The user simply sets the alarm time on his or her iPod, and then plugs in the alarm clock. The unit features a snooze button and a built-in charger so the user can wake up to his or her favorite tunes and to a freshly-charged iPod. It looks like a classic alarm clock and is very easy to use.

Available: davidreport.com
Price: unsettled



Sony ICD F7000

This is Sony's new CD-Tuner-Alarm Clock, the ICD-F7000. It has a double alarm setting so you can make your gimp get up and get breakfast ready for you. It also has a stereo input, so you can use it to mic your gimp while he entertains you at dinner. Did I write gimp again? Sorry, I meant to write DAP. The clocks are available in black and white.

Available: gizmodo.com
Price: US \$79

Pure Chronos alarm clock

Sony is famous for its attractive alarm clocks, but I've found something better. It looks great and it is loaded with features.

The CD Player supports regular CDs and discs with MP3 and WMA content. Four alarms let you configure different waking schedules, each set to one music input: FM, DAB or CD. Standard sleep and snooze buttons are there, combined with a remote if you happen to be on the other side of the bed and your wife is too big to climb over.

Available: techdigest.tv
Price: £99.99



Lauren Moriarty: Sunrise

Sunrise, designed by the London designer Lauren Moriarty, while intended to be a lamp cover, also functions as an alarm clock. Switch on the lamp, and a sudden glowing sun will appear to rise over the London skyline, printed onto the lower position of the shade. Scientists have suggested that the human body wakes up not because of sound, but because of natural sunlight. Sleep under a London night and wake up to a New York morning.

Available: monoscope.com
Price: unsettled



Flying alarm clock

Normal alarm clocks wake you with loud noises to jar you out of slumber. To grab those extra few minutes of sleep, the "snooze" button was invented. This clock reinvents the snooze button and requires its victim to flail madly in the direction of the noise. No more extra minutes of sleep. When the time comes to wake up, this clock spreads its wings and flies away. You will have to chase it down and catch it to shut it up. It is the most amazing alarm clock this shopper has ever seen.

Available: thinkgeek.com
Price: unsettled

Love me, love my ginger

By Gan Tian

The thought of ginger may conjure up words like “healthy” and “tasty,” and for some ladies, steamier sides of “love” and “warmth.”

Whatever you associate with the spice, explore the magic of the root in this two-page spread about its long history, pungent aroma and great taste.

Hidden health benefits

Ginger is considered an “oriental” spice, and for thousands of years, it has had a great impact on traditional medicine – it is hard to talk about ginger without discussing the root’s health benefits.

There is a lot of evidence that ginger is beneficial to our health in addition to tasting great. It has a long tradition of use in traditional medicine, and cultures around the globe have used ginger as both a healing compound and cooking ingredient.

Boosting circulation

Ginger is believed to aid circulation by helping the body sweat – something important when battling colds and flu. Scientists are also investigating the potential of the root to reduce the risks of heart disease. Currently, it is unclear whether its possible heart benefits are a result of its impact on circulation, or if there is another mechanism at work.

Ginger and motion sickness

Frequent travelers swear by the effectiveness of ginger at preventing motion sickness. Some studies have suggested that it is just as effective as Dramamine and other common anti-nausea aids. While these effects are still being studied, it can’t hurt to add a bit of ginger to that last meal before boarding a flight to your final destination.

Most major supermarket chains carry fresh ginger root. When choosing ginger, it’s important to choose roots that are firm and have a distinct aroma. The stronger the odor, the more aromatic it will be in your recipes.

Ginger and cooking

If all this talk about ginger has piqued your culinary curiosity, check out any traditional Indian and Middle Eastern recipes for examples of excellent use of the spice. Those cultures have used ginger extensively for centuries, and have many wonderful ways to combine it with lamb, beef and vegetables.

As a spice, ground ginger is a valuable substitute when fresh root is unavailable, but the fresh root is always preferred, both for its health benefits and its superior taste. Ginger may not be the most familiar spice or herb for foreigners, but it pays to learn more about this great root.



3,000 years of culinary history

Peggy Trowbridge Filippone, the writer of Home Cooking, shared a bit about ginger’s history. Its current name comes from the Middle English word *gingivere*, but ginger dates back over 3,000 years to the Sanskrit word *srngaveram*, meaning “horn root,” a reference to its appearance. In Greek it was *ziggiberis*, and in Latin, *zinziberi*.

Although it was well known to the ancient Romans, ginger nearly disappeared in Europe after the fall of the Empire. Marco Polo brought ginger back into favor in Europe after his trip to the Far East, and it became not only a much-coveted spice, but also an expensive one.

Queen Elizabeth I of England is credited with the invention of the gingerbread man, which has become a popular Christmas treat.

Ginger is in the same family as turmeric and cardamom, and is native to South Asia and has long been a staple addition to Asian cuisines.

It is also popular in



the Caribbean Islands where it grows wild in a lush tropical setting. Jamaican ginger is prized for its strong, perky flavor, and the island provides most of the world’s supply, followed by India, Africa and China.

The gnarled, bumpy root of the ginger plant is the source of its flavor. Although it is easily grown in tropical regions of the south, it rarely blooms when cultivated in the home. It can easily be grown in a flowerpot at home, but it must be brought indoors when the weather turns cold.



Spicy snacks

These Wanmi Ganmeijiang packs contain waxberry, but what is special is that each berry is dipped in ginger water and dried a second time for a sweet-and-sour flavor.

Luzhibao also has a Baojiang pack, full of yellow slices of ginger. Compared with other ginger snacks, this pack is much juicier and more pungent.

If you want a bolder ginger taste, try these. Hongzao Jiangtang is Chinese dates and ginger combined and pressed into candy bars. They are sticky and sweet.

For a sweeter and spicier snack, try Zisu Bingjiang, or dried ginger slices.

All these snacks are available at most major supermarkets for about 10 yuan per bottle or pack



Luzhibao Baojiang



Hongzao Jiangtang



Zisu Bingjiang



Wanmi Ganmeijiang



Photos by Liu Ying

Chewy ginger cookies

By Derrick Sobodash

When I was growing up, my grandmother always kept several boxes of ginger snaps in her house – they were her wintertime staple.

I say “boxes” because, while it would be fun to play on nostalgia of home and hearth, my grandma’s gifts were simply not in the kitchen.

The health benefits of the ginger present in sugar-laden snacks may be questionable, but if you want the same hard, crunchy ginger snaps, virtually every mini-mart from Xicheng to Chaoyang stocks imported ones.

Soft, chewy ginger cookies are a little harder to come by.

If your home is blessed with an oven and you have common measuring cups, you can easily make your own from readily available ingredients. Familiar measuring cups are available from most April Gourmet stores.

According to grandma, ginger cookies will help keep you warm through January. Whether that’s because of the ginger or all the weight that sugar will put on is something you’ll have to discover for yourself.

Ingredients

- 2 1/4 cups flour
- 1 tbsp ground ginger
- 1/4 tsp vanilla powder
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 1/3 cups brown sugar
- 3/4 cup unsalted butter
- 1 egg
- 1 bowl coarse sugar

Instructions

Combine the flour, ginger, vanilla, cinnamon, baking soda and salt in a large mixing bowl. Stir until they are evenly mixed. This is crucial to make sure the baking soda is spread out evenly.

In a separate bowl, mix the brown sugar and butter until smooth. You may want to use your hands to mash it if the butter is too firm. Beat in one egg until mixed evenly.

Combine the butter and sugar mixture with the flour mixture and blend until totally mixed with no flour on the sides. Heat your oven to 175 Centigrade and place the cookie dough mixture in the refrigerator while you clean up that mess you just made in the kitchen.

Pinch off one-inch chunks of dough and form into balls with your hands. Roll each ball in the bowl of Castor sugar, place it on your baking tray and press down slightly with your thumb to make a dent in the top. Bake each tray about 12 to 15 minutes, then move them to the refrigerator to cool and set up.

This recipe will make 48 cookies – quite a deal for the price.

If you are making these cookies for Chinese friends, consider scrapping the cinnamon. While foreigners roll their eyes at cucumber-flavored potato chips, locals find cinnamon – a spice used primarily for meat in Chinese cooking – a curious addition to most baked goods.

Also, most flours sold locally are designed for firm breads and noodles. You may want to ask your vendor if the flour can be used for cakes and cookies before purchase.

If you feel the cookies could use even more ginger flavor, look for a brown sugar flavored with ginger; one by Zhiyuan Foods is available in most markets.



Photos by Liu Ying

Asparagus in ginger-scented brown sauce

By Gan Tian

Faye Levy’s International Vegetable Cookbook has a great recipe for Chinese asparagus in ginger-scented brown sauce.

Ingredients

- 1 pound medium or thick asparagus
- 1/2 cup chicken or vegetable stock
- 1 tbsp plus 1 teaspoon soy sauce
- 1/2 tsp sugar
- 1 tbsp rice wine or dry sherry
- 1 1/2 tsp cornstarch
- 1 tbsp water
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 tsp minced peeled fresh ginger
- 1 green onion, minced (2 tablespoons)

Instructions

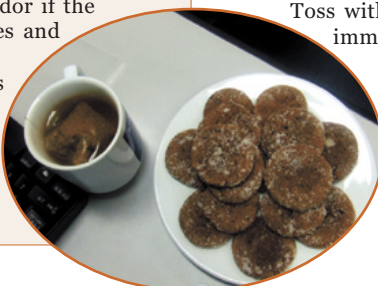
Peel the asparagus and trim the ends. Cut the stalks diagonally into 2-inch pieces. In a bowl, mix the stock, soy sauce, sugar and wine. In a small cup, mix the cornstarch and water.

Heat the oil in a wok or skillet over a high heat, then add the ginger and green onion and stir-fry for 15 seconds. Add the asparagus and stir-fry a few more seconds. Add the broth mixture and bring to a boil. Cover and simmer over medium heat for 3 minutes or until the asparagus is crisp-tender.

Push the asparagus to the side of the pan and stir the corn starch mixture into the simmering liquid, then cook 1-2 minutes or until thickened.

Toss with asparagus and serve immediately.

Note: For a more substantial main course, add a small can of straw mushrooms, drained, or eight ears of freshly-cooked or drained, canned baby corn.



Ginger, carrot and sesame pancakes

By Gan Tian

Marie Simmons, author of Pancakes A to Z, has a great recipe for ginger pancakes. These flavorful flapjacks make a great appetizer or a side dish with Asian cuisine.

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp sesame seeds
- 2 cups shredded carrots
- 1/2 cup finely chopped scallions
- 2 tbsp grated fresh ginger
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 1/4 cup cracker meal
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 tsp salt
- vegetable oil

Thai dipping sauce

Instructions

Toast the sesame seeds in a dry skillet over low heat, stirring until golden, or about 2 minutes.

Combine the carrots, scallions, ginger and garlic in a large bowl, and stir to blend.

Heat 1/2 inch of oil in a medium skillet until hot enough to sizzle a bread crust. Add the batter in heaping tablespoons and fry, turning once, until browned on both sides. Repeat with the remaining batter.

Serve warm with Thai dipping sauce.

Ginger Marmalade Chicken Salad Recipe

By Gan Tian

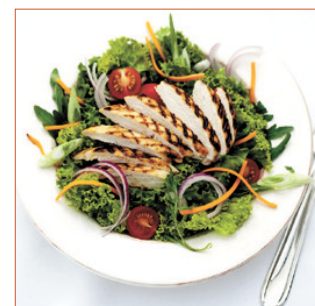
Winter is a time to be lazy, and this simple salad recipe is perfect for when you don’t feel like cooking.

Ingredients

- 4 chicken breasts, halved, skinned and boned
- 1/3 cup orange marmalade
- 2 tbsp ginger, peeled and minced
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup roasted, jarred red peppers cut into strips, reserve 1 tbsp liquid
- 5 tsp red wine vinegar
- 8 cups mixed salad greens
- 4 thin red onion slices, separated into rings

Instructions

Place the chicken on a plate and season with salt and pepper. Mix the marmalade, ginger, garlic and mustard in a bowl. Spoon 1/4 cup of the marmalade mixture, reserving excess in a separate container, over the chicken and turn to coat. Chill the chicken



and remaining marmalade mixture separately overnight.

Preheat your broiler. Arrange the chicken on a broiler pan and broil until cooked through, about 5 minutes per side. Cool slightly. Spread your remaining marmalade mixture over the chicken and cut it crosswise into thin strips.

Whisk the oil, reserved liquid from peppers and vinegar in a large bowl. Season with salt and pepper. Add salad greens, pepper strips and chicken, and toss to coat. Top the salad with onions.

Dining

Exquisite Chinese-Styled Afternoon Tea



Escape from the bustle of the city, warm your body and soul with a selection of eight varieties of aromatic Chinese-style tea, and an assortment of freshly-baked pastries. Enjoy a peaceful afternoon at La Vie and Writers Bar.

Where: La Vie and Writers Bar, Raffle Beijing Hotel, 33 Dongchengan Jie, Dongcheng

Open: Daily 2:30 pm – 5:30 pm

Admission: 195 yuan + 15 percent

Tel: 6526 3388 ext 4181 (for reservations)

Republic Coffee

The big attractions at Republic Coffee are the hot beverages and a diverse dessert menu. An extensive collection of art books, photography and designs can also be found here.

Where: 72 Nanlouguxiang, Dongcheng

Open: Daily 10 am – 5 am next day
Tel: 8402 0835



Roses

You can enjoy reasonably prices beers and a classic menu of western food at Roses which features wooden beams and rustic furniture.

Where: 1 Sanlitun Hou Jie, Chaoyang

Open: Daily 11 am – 3 am next day
Tel: 6461 2689



Nightlife

13 Moons Indie Music – Lonely China Day

Lonely China Day, one of the biggest indie labels in Beijing, is getting bigger and bigger these days. It will hit the Star Live for the first time. With Star's killing sound and light system, Lonely China Day will show you a brand new show. DJ RandomK(e) will be there as a special guest at that time.

Where: Star Live, F/3, Tangguo, 79 Heping Xi Jie, Dongcheng

When: 8:30 pm, January 17

Admission: 30-40 yuan

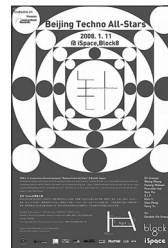


Happy Hour at Zeta Bar

Here you can enjoy a live sax show and free snack food. Chrome cages house an extensive wine collection. A balcony area can be hired for private parties.

Where: 2/f, Hilton Beijing, Dongfang Lu, Dongsanhuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang

When: Mon-Sat 6 pm – 9 pm
Tel: 13601236022



Beijing Techno All-stars

The party features disc jockeys like Weng Weng and Huang Weiwei and video jockeys such as Double Bie Groupe.

Where: 8 complex, West Gate of Chaoyang Park, Chaoyang

When: 10 pm – 6 am, January 11
Tel: 6508 8585

Folk Music

The show features Wang Juan and Dong Zi

Where: 2 Kolegas Bar, inside the drive-in movie theater park, 21 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang

When: 10 pm, January 17
Admission: 30 yuan
Tel: 8196 4820



Day trip: Silver Fox Cave

Enjoy the spectacular sights in the karst cave with the unusual formations and stone flowers. Boating trips run on a stream 106 meters below ground level, where you will see waterfalls along the way. The average temperature in the cave is 14°C – warm in winter and cool in summer. The cave is a natural museum.

Where: Meet at the Chinese Culture Club (CCC) (Kent Center, 29 Anjialou, Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang) for bus transportation.

When: 9:30 am – 4 pm, January 12

Cost: 200 yuan

Tel: 6432 9341, 6432 1041 (registration at CCC is important)

Outdoor



Weekend Tour to Harbin Snow World

Harbin, often referred to as Little Moscow, is the capital of this most northerly province. Situated on the Russian border, the world famous Harbin Snow Festival with its Snow Sculpture Park and Ice Lantern Festival is a family treat not to be missed. Another highlight of this tour is the Siberian Tiger Safari Park.

When: Take the overnight soft-sleeper train to Harbin on January 11 and fly back to Beijing on January 13

Cost: 2,950 yuan

Tel: 6432 9341, 6432 1041 (registration at CCC is important)

Ancient Horse Hoof Prints Hike

The trail starts from an ancient temple complex, west of Beijing. After a ten-minute steep climb through a pine forest, you reach a dirt road, part of which has recently been paved. The path passes by several almost deserted villages. Near the peak at 825 meters is an old stone bridge and ancient prints made in the rock path from centuries of use by horses. The trail then follows the old route used by Empress Dowager (CiXi)

to flee Beijing for her summer residence Chengde during the Qing Dynasty. The descent is gradual and ends after passing through a bustling village filled with interesting people engaged in daily activities.

Where: Meet at the ground of Starbucks (Jiangtai Lu, Lido Holiday Inn)

When: 8:30 am - 5 pm, January 13
Cost: 200 yuan

Tel: 13910025516 (reservations are essential)

Aviation

The Dubai Shopping Festival

Emirates is promoting accommodation packages for as little as \$75 per person per night on a twin-share plan during this season's Dubai Shopping Festival. Packages offer a choice from 18 properties. These packages are available to all Emirates passengers, regardless of class of travel.

When: January 24 - February 24

Tel: 6462 7321 ext. 619

Fax: 64627327

(By Li Jing)



If you have any info for this page, please send it to lixiaojing@ynet.com

Computer users: Beware!

By Han Manman

Working for hours on end in front of a computer is now a fact of life. Whether it's an aspect of your work or whether you use computers for fun, bad habits carry health risks.

Symptoms may be felt during typing, using a mouse or at other times when no work with the hands is being performed, including during the night when these symptoms may awaken you. If you experience these symptoms, or any other persistent or recurring pain or discomfort that you think may be related to using a computer, you should promptly consult a qualified physician.

Computer visio syndrome

If you are staring at a computer screen continuously for long hours, you may be at risk of suffering from computer vision syndrome (CVS), also called occupational asthenopia, which is contracted by people who spend a lot of time on computers.

According to the American Optometric Association, symptoms of CVS include headaches, dry, red or burning eyes, blurred or double vision, trouble focusing, difficulty distinguishing colors or sensitivity to light. Up to 75 percent of computer users suffer CVS symptoms due to glare, poor lighting and improper work station setup.

Suggestion: Keep your monitor about two feet away from you and be sure it is directly in front of you to minimize eye movement. Adjust lighting to remove any glare or reflections. You can also adjust the brightness on your monitor to ease eyestrain. Even simple steps can help, like looking away from your monitor every 20 or 30 minutes and focusing on something farther away. You can always use eye drops to perk up your peepers!

Pain in wrists or fingers?

Some desks have a sharp edge, which can cause pressure on the wrists. If users are trained typists, they usually do not rest their wrists whilst keying but most self taught keyboard users do. This causes pressure and increased risk of injury if the user is also working with their wrists bent.

Striking the keys too hard, excessive mouse use or by not keeping the mouse close enough to the body can also cause pain in the fingers.

Suggestion: A gel mouse wrist rest can be used to provide a soft cushion for the wrists in between periods of keying or mouse activity. Gel mouse mats are also available.

Ideally a mouse should be used directly in front of the shoulder and as close to the body as possible. Don't grip the mouse too tightly, and try to move it with your whole arm, not just your hand.

Neck and back pain

Poor positioning of the keyboard and monitor in relation to the user and incorrect posture can lead to discomfort of the neck and back. The monitor screen should be at a level whereby the user can easily see the screen with the head held at a comfortable and neutral position. If the head has to be constantly turned or tilted in order to see the screen, this will lead to chronic aches and pains in the neck area. This along with any eye strain that occurs can lead to tension headaches.

Suggestion: Avoid hunching. Often computer users will sit at the front of their office chair and hunch forward to see the computer screen. This is definitely the wrong way to use your chair. You actually want to sit back in your chair and have your com-

puter screen at the right height so you don't have to bend your neck. With a regular tennis ball against the back of your chair, you can train yourself to sit back while sitting and working at the computer. If you hunch forward, the ball falls. Stretching your ankles can also ease chronic back pain.

Earbud-related hearing problems

Earbuds are the headphones used with many digital music players. They fit inside the ear but don't cancel out background noise, requiring users to turn up the volume to ear-splitting volumes. This can cause hearing loss after only an hour and 15 minutes. As a result, young people are developing the type of hearing loss normally seen in much older adults.

Suggestion: Turn down the volume and limit the amount of time spent listening to music players to about an hour a day. Headphones that fit outside the ear canal also help as can noise-canceling headphones that reduce background noise so listeners don't have to crank up the volume.

Computer radiation can cause serious problems

Many people, especially young people, keep their computers pumping 24 hours a day downloading films or music throughout the night. Computer radiation can have very negative health effects on the body.

It is most harmful to the skin because we sit directly in front of the computer for long periods of time with our face absorbing the screen's radiation. Radiation can make you feel sick and burn your skin. Most people are not aware of this and continue to suffer with ill health that is a mystery to them not realizing that their computer can do harm.

Suggestion: It is helpful to move the processor tower as far away from your body as possible. This will reduce radiation that could reach and affect your body.



Suggestions for prevention of computer-related injuries

1 Change positions often. Your body can only tolerate one position for about 20 minutes – 30 minutes max. So, remind yourself that prolonged static posture is the enemy!

2 Use as little force as possible – avoid pounding the keys on the keyboard or holding the mouse or pens and pencils in a death grip.

3 Use a telephone headset or a shoulder rest on the telephone receiver to avoid

bending the neck and raising the shoulder to hold the phone.

4 Keep the shoulders and arms relaxed while typing. Keep your whole body as relaxed as possible.

5 Use your eyes properly. Blink and see beyond than the computer screen. Look into the distance frequently.

6 Nighttime computer users lose sleep. Experts suggest that you stop using the

computer two hours before sleeping.

7 Use mobile and size-adjustable chairs and make sure that you have adequate clearance space for your thighs and legs, particularly if you frequently change your body posture.



Photo by Maxppp

24 hours in 300 miles

Though China welcomed in 2008 before any western countries, it was not the first. The International Date Line is drawn through the middle of the Pacific islands. So if you are looking to squeeze an extra 24 hours into 2008 at

the end of the year, head there.

The New Year arrives in Tonga before any other country, and arrives in Western Samoa after any other country.



The Ha'amonga'a Maui Trilithon



A whale raises its tail for a deep dive.



Local performance



A whale watching ship

Tonga

Tonga consists of more than 150 islands spread over approximately 140,000 square meters of the Pacific Ocean. About 40 of the islands are inhabited. The eastern islands, including Tongatapu – the biggest archipelago in Tonga – are coral formations, while volcanic islands lie in the west. Volcanic ash creates fertile soil, and the islands are well-vegetated.

Whale watching

Tonga is the best place in the South Pacific to watch humpback whales. The whales visit Vava'u Island every year between June and October, using the deep, protected bays to give birth to their calves and to mate.

The peak of whale-watching season is July to September, when as many as 20 whales can be found in and around the bay at any time. Whale watching tours by boat are available during this time, and the charters follow strict guidelines set out by the Ministry of Fisheries. Scuba diving is banned around whales, although it is possible to swim or snorkel within 30 meters and listen to the exquisite songs of the humpback whales which rever-

berate in the water for miles. In some cases, the whales approach boats out of curiosity, especially younger calves.

Whistling blowholes

Some of the most spectacular blowholes in the South Pacific can be found along the terraced coastline of southwest Tongatapu. You can find not only one blowhole, but hundreds along a four-mile-stretch of windswept coastline. The largest spouts throw sea water almost 30 meters into the air. Best viewed at high tide, the blowholes are accessible within a kilometer of the inland village of Houma.

Ancient Trilithon

The archaeologically-rich area of Lapaha on the eastern side of the main island offers the largest terraced tombs in the South Pacific. There are several cleared sites that guides will take you to visit, explaining the rich history of the Tongan Kings.

About 8 kilometers farther along the north point is the hugely-impressive trilithon of Ha'amonga 'A Maui. This ancient trilithon is a massive 12-ton stone archway made from three single limestone slabs. How they got there and what it was used for is uncertain, but more credible theories suggest they are a gateway

to the Royal Gardens or a shrine for observing the seasons. Similar but smaller structures can be found within the Kingdom's ancient empire.

Tongan feast

Participating in a Tongan feast should be on any traveler's itinerary. The wonderful get-togethers involve traditional dancing and copious quantities of food.

Any function, from weddings and birthdays to welcoming ceremonies or grand openings involve a large village gathering. Pigs, highly prized in Tonga and seen wandering freely in every village, are killed and cooked in an underground earthen oven with fish and root crops.

A few resorts offer their own feast nights with dancing. The Samaritan Inn on the west tip of Tongatapu has one of the best on the islands.

Local market

The Talamahu Market in downtown Nukualofa, capital of Tonga, is a great place to spend a few hours browsing handicraft stalls and watching locals shop. Local produce and arts and crafts are the most commonly traded goods. Try local fruits in season or purchase fresh coconuts. Tongans are very hospitable and always willing to chat with tourists.

Big and beautiful

Tonga is one of the fattest countries. In Tongan tradition, the fattest are considered the most beautiful. Its former king, Taufa'ahau Tupou IV, died last year. He weighed in at 200 kilograms and was regarded the most handsome man in the country.

The people tend to put on pounds because the favorite Tongan foods – potato, taro and pachyrhizus – contain lots of fat and they seldom exercise. Locals also like to sleep 10 hours per day. However, many Tongans are recognizing the dangers of obesity and have begun to change their lifestyles.

Superior to men in the family

In Tongan life, the family is of the utmost importance. Each family member plays a role, with the eldest commanding the most respect. Women benefit from higher social status than in other parts of Polynesia, as tradition grants them authority over male family members.

Public life, however, is still dominated by men. The eldest sister acts as the family matriarch and oversees her siblings, nieces and nephews. Children reside with grandparents, aunts or uncles as often as with their parents.



Tongan women make decorative bark cloth. Step 1: Pounding bark to soften and spread. Step 2: Applying pigment. Step 3: Final ornamentation.

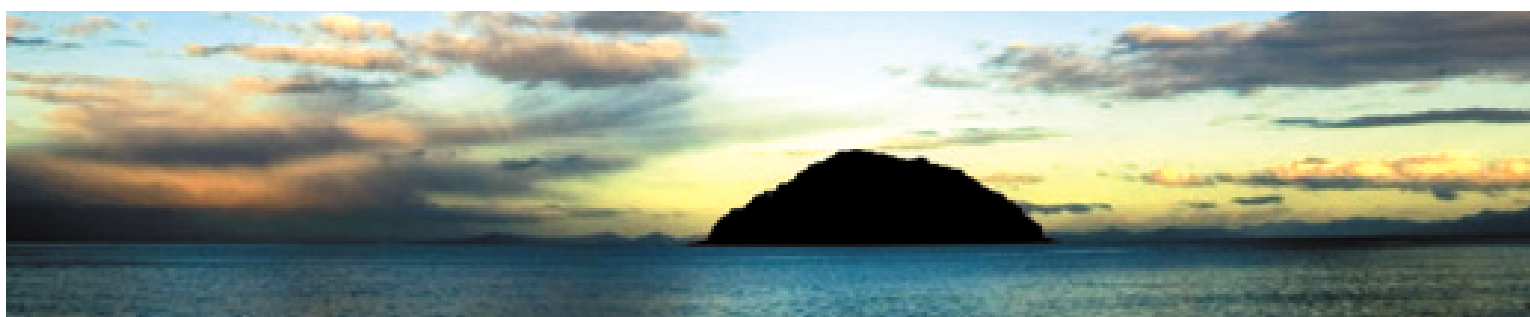
Tonga

Getting there

There are direct flights from Australia, New Zealand, Europe, US, Fiji, Western Samoa and American Samoa to Tonga via the Air New Zealand, Air Pacific, Pacific Blue and Polynesian Airlines.

(By Jackie Zhang)

Continued on page 21 ...



... continued
from page 20



The beach in Western Samon



A breadfruit tree



An oval-like fale

Western Samoa

The Samoan Islands are about 300 kilometers east of Tonga. The islands are split into two groups: east and west. The eastern islands are a US territory, and the western islands are an independent country.

The first settlers of the Samoan islands are estimated to have arrived 3,500 years ago, migrating in from other Polynesian islands. In 1962 Western Samoa became an independent country, while Eastern Samoa remains under US control. While Western Samoans have retained their traditional lifestyle, Eastern, or American Samoans, have become industrialized.

Breadfruit tree

The breadfruit used to be a staple of the Samoan diet. It is seldom seen in other regions of the world, but is common throughout the Samoan islands. Breadfruit trees are handsome and fast-growing. They are tall and often have a clear trunk; bright-green and glossy on the

upper surface, but with conspicuous yellow veins; the underside is dull, yellowish and coated with minute, stiff hairs.

The tree bears a multitude of tiny flowers: the male densely set on a drooping, cylindrical or club-shaped spike, thick, yellowish at first and becoming brown; the female massed in a somewhat rounded or elliptic, green, prickly head, which develops into the compound fruit.

In the green stage, the fruit is hard and the interior is white, starchy and somewhat fibrous. When fully ripe, the fruit is somewhat soft, the interior is cream colored or yellow and pasty, and also sweetly fragrant. All parts of the tree, including the unripe fruit, are rich in milky, gummy latex.

House and tombs

Most Samoans live in small seaside villages. They reside in thatched-roof huts with their extended family. A chief and several village elders head the village, but each family takes care of itself.

Most houses have a separate oval-like *fale*, or building, with

a number of poles around the edges. Some fale are brightly colored, some have thatch roofs, but most use aluminum now. Some are filled with furniture and others are vacant. Local people say the fale is the main place for them to greet their guests.

Almost every home has an ancestral tomb in front of it. The tomb is a place that the whole family gathers to chat at night.

Ritual tattooing

One of the best-known features of the Samoan culture is ritual tattooing. It consists of elaborate designs done from the waist down to the knees. The tattoo is created using primitive tools and is a long and painful process taking up to three months to complete. Both men and women can receive the tattoo, but the men's tattoo is more detailed and more commonly seen.

Siva dancing

Samoa dance is possibly the one area of Samoan culture which has been least affected by contact with western civilization. Whereas Samoan music has adopted guitars and other

musical instruments, dance, which relies solely upon the performer's body, still requires the performer to retain grace and move their arms and hands in the approved fashion.

The best time to see Samoan dance is at a *fiafia*, a traditional Samoan meal accompanied by singers and dancers. Most of the major hotels have fiafia one night a week, so you should take the opportunity to go and see one if available.

If attending a fiafia, be aware audience participation is usually required – especially from front-row guests.

What people wear

The *lavalada* is a skirt-like traditional garment worn by most Samoan men. People like immigration officials, policemen on the street and taxi drivers all wear a lavalada, though most modern schoolboys wear shorts underneath. You can see police in lavaladas at 8 am every morning when they march along the waterfront. It is part of their uniform. For adult men, the lavalada can have side pockets, a watch or a cell phone sewn into it.

Western Samoa

Getting there

Western Samoa has not opened an embassy in China. All foreign nationals are granted a 30-day visa on arrival in Western Samoa. America Samoa is governed by the same immigration regularities as the US, so check with the US Embassy for details.

Western Samoa's international airport is Fagali'l International. It can be reached from other countries such as Australia and New Zealand.

(By Annie Wei)



Samoa dance is an ancient tradition.

Photos provided by Pbase.com

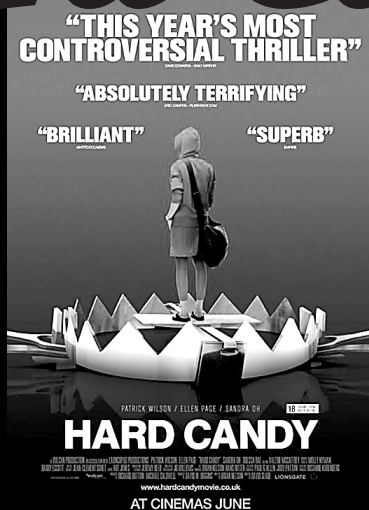
Hard Candy

"THIS YEAR'S MOST
CONTROVERSIAL THRILLER"

"ABSOLUTELY TERRIFYING"

"BRILLIANT"

"SUPERB"



Synopsis:

After three weeks chatting with thirty-two year-old photographer Jeff Kohlver on the Internet, fourteen-year-old Hayley Stark meets him at the Nighthawks coffee shop.

Hayley flirts with him in spite of the difference in age and proposes to go to his house. Once there, she prepares screwdrivers for them and Jeff passes out. When he awakes, he is tied to a chair, and Hayley accuses him of pedophilia. Jeff denies the charge and Hayley begins to torture him in a mouse and cat game.

(2005)

Scene 1: at Nighthawks sales counter

(Jeff invites Hayley to have coffee with him.)

Hayley: Oh, so good. I want more.

Geoff: Don't get greedy.

Hayley: Geoff?

Geoff: Hayley.

Hayley: Oh my god! (wipes her mouth) This is like – I was going to be so sophisticated ⁽¹⁾ when we met ...

Geoff: A little hard to do that with your mouth full of whatever that is ...

Hayley: It's great. You should try it ...

Geoff: I will. (He takes off a little cream from her lip and tastes it.) Yum ⁽²⁾.

Hayley: That's what I was thinking.

Geoff: Pardon?

Hayley: Well. You know. You don't look like the kind of guy who

has to meet girls over the Internet.

Geoff: I think it's better to talk to people online first. You get to know what they're like inside. When you work as a photographer, you find out real quick: people's faces lie.

Hayley: Does my face lie?

Geoff: I look at those eyes and see ... a girl who reads Zadie Smith ... who listens to John Mayer and Coldplay ... who loves old Monty Python episodes ⁽³⁾ ... and who desperately ... deeply ... sadly ... wants ... needs ... longs for ⁽⁴⁾ ... more ... chocolate.

Hayley: (laughing) Excellent judge of character! Two raspberry ⁽⁵⁾ truffles ⁽⁶⁾, two lemon ganaches, two milk creams ...

Geoff: What's a ganache?

Hayley: You don't know ganaches? You're lucky you're with a woman of the world to introduce you to such things.

Movie of the Week

By Gan Tian

Hard Candy is an intense psychological drama, with incredible performances by both Ellen Page and Patrick Wilson. The two actors are practically the only two people with lines in the film, aside from some brief appearances by Sandra Oh and Jennifer Holmes. There are also questions that remain unanswered until the end of the film, when everything is wrapped up nicely – leaving you puzzled to the true identities and motives of the characters throughout most of the film.

Scene 2: Jeff's living room

(Jeff is in one of his Aaron chairs, and tied up. His wrists are tied to the armrests, his ankles to the legs. He's baffled, too groggy to understand what's happened to him.)

Hayley: Did you call me?

Geoff: Wha-?

Hayley: Just looking through your medicine cabinet ⁽⁷⁾. Boring! No Valley of the Dolls stuff at all. Can't help wondering, though, why all the lubricants.

Geoff: I ...

Hayley: You'll tell me when you're ready, I guess. Take your time.

Geoff: What did you ...?

Hayley: Remember what I said about not drinking anything you didn't see made yourself? Good advice for everyone.

Geoff: Sorry you were out for so long. I've never drugged anyone before!

Hayley: when I swiped ⁽⁸⁾ this from my dad, it didn't come with any directions! And I couldn't very well ask him how much it would take to knock someone out ⁽⁹⁾, huh?! Then again, maybe I used more than I thought. Those screwdrivers ⁽¹⁰⁾ could've affected my judgment, ya think?

Geoff: Don't understand ...



(Hayley pours him a glass of water from the tap, brings it over and carefully holds it to his mouth.)

Hayley: Have some water. It'll help you come to. It's real water.

Geoff: This isn't funny.

Hayley: True. True.

Geoff: What the hell is this ...?

Hayley: Give me a moment. I want to look through the drawers over there. People keep the strangest things. I mean, why would you hang onto ⁽¹¹⁾ Albert Belle? Some things can't be explained.

Geoff: This is some ... teenage joke?

Hayley: Teenage, yes. Joke, no. We have way too many Triple-A batteries at our house, too. Why do they even make these?

Geoff: Let me go! Let me go!

Vocabulary

- sophisticated:** developed to a high degree of complexity
- yum:** used to express pleasure when eating, or at the prospect of eating a particular food.
- episode:** an event or a group of events occurring as part of a larger sequence; an incident or period considered in isolation
- long for:** wanting or desiring something badly.
- raspberry:** an edible soft fruit related to the blackberry family, consisting of a cluster of reddish-pink drupelets.
- truffle:** a soft candy made

Scene 3: on the roof of Jeff's apartment, day

(Jeff finds Hayley on the roof, and tries to kill her.)

Hayley: I thought you'd never get here.

Geoff: You dropped this. (He pulls himself up to the roof, knife in one hand.)

Hayley: I had to.

Geoff: Oh, yeah?

Hayley: Otherwise you might've stayed down there forever. What were you doing, jerking off? Oh, silly me, you can't!

Geoff: What?

Hayley: You're never going to get much entertainment down there again, are you? Every time you want to use your dick, you're gonna remember your balls ground up in the garbage disposal ⁽¹²⁾.

Geoff: Which do you want to fuck first, me or the knife?

(But he stops when she lifts up his gun.)

Hayley: Nope. Uh-uh.

No way.

Geoff: You don't know how to use that.

Hayley: Now you're kidding, right? You forgot I'm an honor student? Nothing I can't learn when I set my ...

(Without warning he throws the belly chain at her.)

Hayley: Nice try. Now throw the knife in the backyard.

Geoff: Or you'll shoot again? Shoot me. What's stopping you?

Hayley: It's not me you have to worry about. It's Janelle. I called her. I said I was Lieutenant Hayley from the LAPD. How far does she live, Geoff? The deal's still open. Put the noose around your neck, you end the whole game. I'll still pick up the evidence, but you're running out of time.

Geoff: Who ... are you?

of a chocolate mixture, typically flavored with rum and covered with cocoa

7. cabinet: a cupboard with drawers or shelves for storing or displaying articles

8. swipe: hit or try to hit with a swinging blow

9. knock out: make a person

unconscious, typically with a blow to the head

10. screwdriver: in this case, an alcoholic beverage made of vodka and orange juice.

11. hang onto: keep or retain.

12. disposal: the action of throwing away or getting rid of something.



Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Gan Tian at gantian@ynet.com.

Chicken leg, delicious and pornographic!

By Li Fenghua

We recently came across an odd story from a book titled *Yixie Yiqu* written by Mao Ronggui, that we thought readers might find curious.

The story goes that a professor went to the US last year to study for his PhD. He loved chicken leg rice, *jituifan*, very much and was anxious to seek out a restaurant immediately upon his arrival in the US for his favorite culinary delight.

His "chicken leg" quest turned out quite embarrassing when one day, he innocently entered a restaurant and found a quiet corner where he could privately revel in the chicken dish he was about to wrap his taste buds around.

The waitress, totally unaware of what a strange request was about to exit my friend's anxious mouth, even more innocently asked what he'd like to order with her pen and pad poised.

"Chicken Leg," the professor blurted out without hesitation and a huge smile on his face with visions of chicken legs dancing in his head.

The waitress blushed waiting for him to explain or possibly apologize for his strange request. All the people in the dining room looked at him with astonishment and some giggled into their napkins.

The professor thought that maybe he hadn't make his request very clear, so, thinking more volume might be the solution, raised his voice and repeated, "I'd like chicken leg!"

The whole restaurant burst into laughter. And now it was his time to turn bright

red in total embarrassment. He didn't know what to do.

The waitress waited for a moment and then attempted to rescue him from a very awkward situation. She scurried back to the kitchen and returned with a large, juicy chicken drumstick dripping in grease which she plopped onto his dinner plate and said jokingly, "There you go, sir. I think, if you examine this leg closely, you will find it is very sexy indeed."

The professor was still completely confused after he checked out of the hotel. Once he consulted with his friend, Jason Rimes, the light finally went on and Peter started to understand why the people in the hotel acted so strangely toward him.

"I was wondering why they all laughed so loudly and rudely at me when I ordered chicken leg!" He was still angry about the whole uncomfortable ordeal.

"What exactly did you order that brought about this unusual reaction from the restaurant patrons?" Rimes asked.

"I simply ordered a chicken leg – which I received! It was very delicious and so succulent and juicy ..." he still seemed immersed in the lovely memory of the tasty poultry morsel that had been delivered to his table that fateful night.

His friend finally revealed to him that what he had ordered had a very different connotation from what he imagined it to be. "Chicken leg" refers sometimes to a hooker's leg," Rimes said, "and the waitress, as well as all the restaurant diners that night, must have thought that you were being fairly pornographic!"



Photo by Liu Ying

Blacklist

Beijing Today has come up with Blacklist, a new column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then this page is your new best friend. Watch it for each week.

Local professor: Zhu Shida

1. He told to Beijing News

The verb, to tell, is a transitive verb. So, simply say, "He told *Beijing News*." It is incorrect to say, "He told to *Beijing News*."

2. The whereabouts of the other zodiac heads is unknown.

The problem with this sentence is the sequence between the subject and the predicate. As the subject is plural the verb

has to be "are." Though very minute, you will have to be very careful about these grammatical situations all the time.

3. He visited to London.

As in sample one, the verb "to visit" is again a transitive verb. So, you have to say, "He visited London." However, when you turn this verb into a noun, you may say, "His visit to London." Don't confuse the two.

Native Speaker: Joe Edwards

1. He told to Beijing News

In this sentence our little friend, "to" is not welcome since the verb, "to tell" is a transitive verb and doesn't require any help. So, drop the "to" and you are on the right track to perfect grammar. The sentence should read, "He told *Beijing News*."

2. The whereabouts of the other zodiac heads is unknown.

Although it may not sound like it, the word, "whereabouts" is indeed plural and requires a suitable verb to accompany it. So, out with the "is" and in with the "are" to correct this problem.

The sentence should read, "The whereabouts of the other zodiacs are unknown." You must remain constantly grammatically vigilant to catch these little glitches.

3. He visited to London.

Again, as in example one, we are dealing with a transitive verb here and the "to" is not necessary so must be ousted. The sentence then reads, "He visited London." If you are stubborn and desperate to use your little "to," you may re-construct your sentence to talk about "his visit to London." Is everybody happy?

宠物 PET

很抱歉，酒店不允许携带宠物。

We are so sorry that pets bring to the Hotel.

Photo by Liu Chenlu

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please take a picture and send it to gantian@ynet.com together with your name and address.

Pity the pets

By Derrick Sobodash

Hotels are jumping on the English bandwagon, eager to snap into shape for all the tourists who will pass through the country this year. Unfortunately, many English efforts to date are want of proofreading.

This sign can be found at the reception desk of a Henan Province hotel, "We are so sorry that pets bring to the Hotel."

To be sure, it is a funny image – even if missing an object. What do pets bring to the hotel? Pet food? That must be it. The hotel's housekeeping services don't like the smell of empty cat food cans left on the heater. Maintenance was equally angered when a worker discovered a shower drain was clogged with Alpo.

Obviously, the mistake in the hotel's message is that pets don't bring things to the hotel: guests bring pets. The use of "We are so sorry" is also a little odd – the meaning here is closer to regret. For example, "We regret to inform you that the bellboy will stomp you if you bring in a pet." A simple "Sorry" would suffice.

Since the new subject of the sentence will be "guests," we need some kind of action to explain what they cannot do with the object, "pets." In this case, "are not allowed" works, and the answer to what is not allowed is "to bring."

Using the above suggestions the sign would read, "Sorry, guests are not allowed to bring pets into the hotel."

Friday, January 11

Exhibition

The First Invitational Exhibition of Chinese Contemporary Artists

Where: Chinese Artist Space, 11/F, Building A, China Foreign Language Mansion, West Third Ring Bei Lu, Haidian

When: Daily 9 am – 6 pm, until January 15

Admission: Free

Tel: 8882 5486

Celebration



New concept experimental art exhibition being held, featuring a printmaking demonstration and trial printing.

Where: Amelie Art Gallery, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, between Red Gate and White Space Gallery

When: Tue-Sun 11 am – 7 pm, until February 14

Admission: Free

Tel: 6530 7048

Halation Politics



Where: China Art Seasons, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang

When: Tue-Sun 10:30 am – 6:30 pm, until February 3

Admission: Free

Tel: 6431 1900

Movie

Dark Blue Almost Black

Where: Beijing Cervantes Institution, A 1 Gongti Nan Lu, Chaoyang

When: 7 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5879 9666



Stage in February

Concert

FIYTA Ning Feng Solo Violin Concert

Ning Feng, the most recent winner of the Paganini International Violin Competition in Genoa, is holding a solo concert where he will combine Western and Chinese classical melodies on Valentine's Day.

Who: Ning Feng

Where: Century Theater, 40 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang

When: 7:30 pm,

February 14

Tel: 5905 9082

Admission: 80-880 yuan

New Year Concert

Who: Symphony Orchestra of Russia

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Chaoyang

When: 7:30 pm,

February 7

Admission: 50-1,000 yuan

Full House of Love

Who: China Drama and Dance Symphony Orchestra

Where: Zhongshan Music Hall, inside Zhongshan Park, Dongcheng

When: 7:30 pm,

February 14

Admission: 80-999 yuan

Spring Festival Concert

Who: China Film Symphony Orchestra

Where: Beijing Music Hall, 1 Bei Xinhua Jie, Xicheng

When: 7:30 pm,

February 10

Admission: 100-1,280 yuan

Dance

Sleeping Beauty

Who: Russian Ballet Troupe

Where: Beijing Exhibition Theater, 135 Xizhimen Wai Dajie, Xicheng

When: 7:30 pm,

February 7

Admission: 50-800 yuan

Nutcracker

Who: Russian Ballet Troupe

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Chaoyang

When: 7:30 pm,

February 3

Admission: 50-1,000 yuan

Swan

Who: English National Ballet

Where: Century Theatre, 40 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang

When: 7:30 pm,

January 30-February 3

Admission: 180-1,680 yuan

Notre-Dame de Paris

Who: Kremlin Palace Ballet Theater

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Chaoyang

When: 7:30 pm,

February 12-14

Admission: 180-880 yuan

Drama

Red and Black

Who: Shanghai Dramatic Arts Center

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Chaoyang

When: 7:30 pm,

February 19-22

Admission: 100-1,280 yuan

(By Li Jing)

Saturday, January 12

Exhibition

Seek the Peaceful – Qu Xin Solo2 Exhibition

Where: 3818 Cool Gallery, 3818 Warehouse, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang

When: Tue-Sun 10:30 am – 6 pm, until January 30

Admission: Free

Tel: 8688 2525, 8456 6664

New Vision – Joint Exhibition



The exhibition features Wang Fei, Zhang Zhen, He Zubin, Shen Jingdong and Wang Zhijie.

Where: New Millennium Gallery, 3818 Warehouse, No 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang

When: Daily 11 am – 6 pm, until January 31

Admission: Free

Tel: 6432 4122, 13911166261

Labyrinth - Group Exhibition

Where: 798 Space, 4 Jiuxianqiao

Lu, Chaoyang

When: Daily 10 am – 7 pm, until February 15

Admission: Free

Tel: 6438 4862, 6437 6248

Movie

Les Bronzés 3: Amis Pour La Vie

Where: French Culture Center, 1/F, Guangcai International Mansion, 18 Gongti Xi Lu, Chaoyang

When: 7:30 pm

Admission: 10-20 yuan

Tel: 6553 2627

Sunday, January 13

Exhibition

Li Jikai Solo Exhibition

Where: F/3 Beijing Today Art Museum, Building 3, 32 Baiziwan Lu, Chaoyang

When: Daily 10 am – 5 pm, until January 20

Admission: Free

Tel: 5876 9690

Flower of Desire – Li Ji Solo Exhibition



Where: New Space, Cheng Xindong Space for Contemporary Art 1, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang

When: Tue-Sun 10 am – 6 pm, until January 25

Admission: Free

Tel: 6433 4579

Before the Game

Where: Ferry Art Center, F8-1003, Brewery Art Complex, Beihuqu Lu, Andingmen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang

When: Tue-Sun 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5202 3955

Movie

Knock on Wood

Where: French Culture Center, 1/F, Guangcai International Mansion, 18 Gongti Xi Lu, Chaoyang

When: 5 pm

Admission: 10-20 yuan

Tel: 6553 2627